

HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION? • SUPREME COURT RULINGS

In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

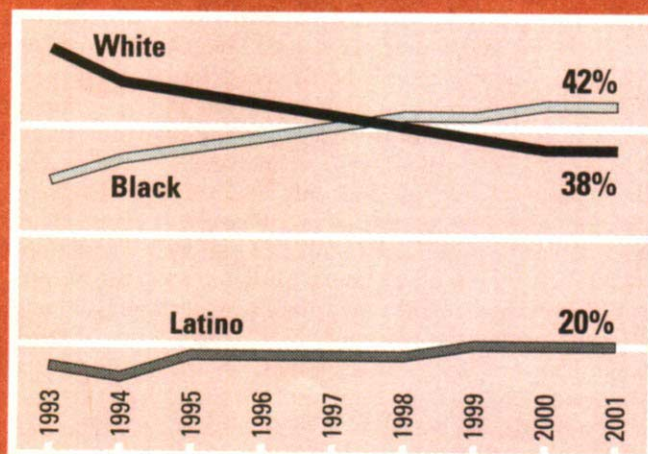
August 11, 2003

The Changing Face of

AIDS

Young black men bear the brunt of the epidemic

By Karen Hawkins



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Prescription for Privatization

Democrats who supported the dreadful Republican legislation for prescription drug coverage under Medicare, which passed the House and Senate in late June, rationalized their support as a case of the camel getting his nose into the tent. In years to come, they suggested, there will be opportunities to improve prescription drug coverage once the principle is established. But the camel that is likely to make the most progress into the tent is not the carrier of prescription drugs. It's the one bearing the dangerous baggage of Medicare privatization.

With this legislation—details of which will now be worked out in a House-Senate committee—Bush may undercut one of the most potent issues for Democrats in the next election (since the plan conveniently won't go into effect until 2006, insulating Republicans from backlash about its shortcomings). Right-wingers in and outside Congress grumbled at the establishment of another "entitlement," but as the price of passage, they exacted even more tax cuts, crippling restrictions on the prescription plan, and the beginnings of privatization.

The House bill is even worse than the Senate version, and there's still hope that the legislation will not survive conference compromises. But the legislative history is an argument against the unfortunate prevailing wisdom among Democrats that only incremental change is possible. More incremental change like

this will destroy Medicare. Full national health insurance not only is the best policy, but by being clear and understandable, it would be the best politics for Democrats as well—if they had the will to fight for it.

The House and Senate plans share numerous flaws. The average Medicare beneficiary is likely to pay even more for prescription drugs under these plans than currently without any coverage, according to an analysis by the Consumers Union, and only about 22 percent of total senior drug costs will be covered. Except for the large number of seniors with relatively low bills who are likely to opt out, thus pushing up the likely premium costs for participants, the plan will force participants into private plans. Especially in the House version, the legislation would substantially privatize Medicare as a whole around 2010. While there are token gestures toward

moderating drug prices, both the House and Senate bills actually prohibit the federal government from bargaining with pharmaceutical companies to get good deals—a proven strategy followed by nearly every other nation and even our own Veterans Administration. The legislation would undermine the universality of Medicare by permitting variations in premiums and benefit packages among different regions and private plans.

The new legislation would be especially bad for poor people and would likely provide special benefits for the well-to-do. For example, roughly 6 million individuals who are eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare will, unlike under current policy, be primarily covered by Medicaid. This means that their prescription benefits are likely to be inferior to and less predictable than Medicare drug coverage, since the states have much more control and financial responsibility. Also, as a concession to the far right, the House prescription drug bill folds in legislation establishing Health Security Savings Accounts (estimated to cost \$174 billion for 10 years compared to less than \$400 billion for prescription drugs). These HSSAs, which allow individuals or those with high-deductible employer health insurance to save money tax-free to cover medical costs, are

The new prescription drug legislation would be especially bad for poor people.

likely to become a tax shelter for the affluent. At the same time, they will encourage employers to shift to high-deductible policies, undermining traditional employer-provided insurance and hurting low-income families. The incentives in the legislation are also likely to lead many employers to drop the prescription drug coverage they now provide their retirees, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

How can Congress stiff seniors under the guise of helping them? How does prescription legislation translate into new tax breaks for the wealthy, more expensive drug costs, and a boon to the private health insurance industry? Clearly it reflects the political interests and strategic cleverness of the Republicans, but it just as clearly reflects the failure of all too many Democrats.

—David Moberg

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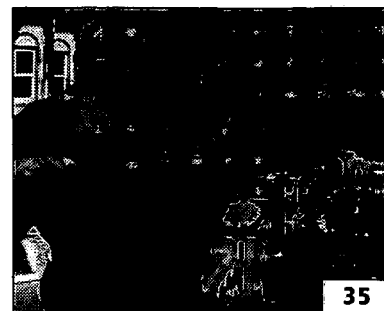
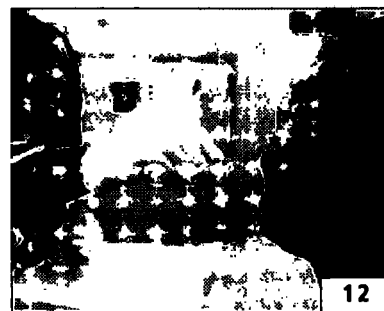
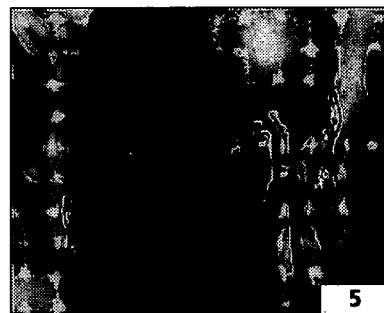
By Joshua Rothkopf

FILM: *The Hulk* and *28 Days Later*.

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By Matt Isaac

What job hunters find in hard times.



Radioactivism

Frida Berrigan's article on depleted uranium was very disturbing ("Weapon of Mass Deception," July 21). It is good to know that there is an effort in Congress to require studies of the health impact. Readers may want to urge their members of Congress to co-sponsor the legislation, HR 1483, or thank them if they are among the 20 who have. Their names can be found at www.thomas.loc.gov under the legislation number.

The bill has been referred to the Armed Services and Energy & Commerce Committees.

Anne Larson
Great Falls, Virginia

Your reporting on the issue of depleted uranium was encouraging. There are a few points worth additional comment. While the DU issue certainly has been a "non-issue" in the media for some time due to government obfuscation, it represents for antinuclear weapons activists only one aspect of a larger issue—that of uranium weapons as a group.

All uranium isotopes have the quality of high density, regardless of their relative proportions in a compound. All possess the ability for high penetration of "hardened targets," whether tank armor or underground targets. Recent findings from Afghanistan done by the Uranium Medical Research Center (www.UMRC.net) of Canada have shown, for example, that uranium contamination in bombed areas was unnaturally high; yet it did not seem to be from depleted uranium. Another uranium weapon presumably was responsible.

While DU introduced the world to the concept of uranium weapons, British researcher Dai Williams has recently chronicled 21 new or upgraded weapons systems evidently using uranium (www.eoslifework.co.uk). These "big bombs"—hard-target cruise missiles, bunker-busters, etc.—each contain up to a ton of uranium.

For the antinuclear weapons movement to succeed, it must confront and win on the entire category of uranium weapons, rather than taking on each weapon one at a time. Radioactive weapons as a group are illegal under existing laws and conventions. Their use represents a deliberate

attempt by the U.S. government and others to blur the distinction between "conventional" and "nuclear" weapons, to make the latter more "acceptable," and to make their use more difficult to contest.

Researchers and activists are gathering October 16-19 in Hamburg, Germany, for a conference (which will also be broadcast over the Internet) to pull together what is known about DU and uranium weapons, and to build a more effective movement to deal with the governmental deceptions that have obscured the truth about DU and uranium weapons for so long. For more information, go to www.uraniumweapons.conference.de.

Marion K pker
Hamburg, Germany

Into the Electoral Arena

Although Ana Marie Cox may be right in arguing that the mainstream Democratic leadership "now seems bent on wiping out the demand" for trained liberal leaders ("Needed: A Vast Liberal Conspiracy," July 7), she can no longer argue that no organizations exist for producing those leaders. Just as the late Paul Wellstone combined grassroots organizing with participation in the electoral system, those who carry on his work through Wellstone Action (www.wellstoneaction.org) are in the process of

training a new generation of leaders to enter the electoral fray, while maintaining a commitment to ethical progressive politics.

In three closely contested Senate campaigns, Wellstone showed Democrats how standing on principle and putting the needs of ordinary people first could lead to victory. Right-wing funders who took the long view after Republican defeats in the '60s and '70s put their money into training programs such as the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, whose graduates now occupy the seats of power. Progressives should follow their example by supporting the training programs of Wellstone Action and the campaigns of grassroots leaders (perhaps those starting out at the local and state level) rather than funding a national Democratic Party that has turned its back on progressive ideals in the pursuit of "winning for the sake of winning."

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Terry LaBan



No Reservations

Union workers in Chicago put the heat on hotels

By David Moberg

CHICAGO—The noisy picket line now outside the venerable downtown Congress Hotel in this city is both an anachronism and a harbinger of the future in the hotel industry. The strike by 130 room attendants, bartenders, telephone operators, and other members of Hotel and Restaurant Employees (HERE) Local 1 was called on June 15 to insist that the Congress match the terms of the landmark citywide hotel contract won by most unionized hotel workers in Chicago last September. But the owners of the Congress, who had previously followed the citywide pattern even after dropping out of the management bargaining association, refused. Instead, claiming that negotiations were at a stalemate, they imposed a 7 percent pay cut in May—which brought wages for room attendants down to \$8.21 an hour, compared to \$10 an hour at other union hotels in Chicago—and effectively cut off health insurance for workers by refusing to pay increased premiums set by the health and welfare fund.

Unlike most big city hotels, the 840-room Congress is not part of a national or global corporation; it is owned by a limited partnership chaired by Albert Nasser, the Syrian-born owner of a global network of apparel manufacturing and importing operations, including Gilmart Industries, a major supplier to discount retailers like Wal-Mart. Historically hotels have been owned and operated by local investors, but now big corporations typically have a major stake in ownership, management, or franchising, and sometimes in all facets of running a hotel. In response, HERE is attempting to move toward a more national approach to hotel bargaining. Now contracts vary dramatically from one metropolitan market to another, even though the same corporations are in control.

For Local 1, winning citywide terms is important to send a message to unionized employers that the union is willing and able to strike to enforce its standards. After



"We're going to be out here at least for months," workers say.

decades of decline and weakness, in 1999 the local was put under the control of a trustee, who rejuvenated it by organizing membership involvement. Although it had mobilized its members last fall, the union won its contract without a strike, and the work stoppage at the Congress is the first hotel strike in many decades in Chicago. It also sends a message to workers in the large number of non-union hotels that the local is now preparing to organize. "This is the first fight on the street for this union," says Union President Henry Tamarin, "and whether we win or lose, other employers in existing unionized locations and non-union hotels are going to be looking at us and forming opinions."

Union leaders have warned workers that it could be a long strike, and last spring

more than 90 percent of Congress workers signed a petition pledging to strike until Congress agreed to the citywide terms, even if it meant forcing the current owners to shut the hotel down. "We're going to be out here at least for months," Tamarin says. "This is a rich guy who doesn't believe workers should have rights, and he doesn't need the money." In similar circumstances over the past decade, HERE has fought recalcitrant employers for more than four years at locations such as the Box Tree Restaurant in New York and the Frontier Hotel in Las Vegas (the Frontier fight ended when the owner sold to a businessman willing to sign a contract). Nasser, who apparently owns no other hotels, has run up debt on the hotel, which he bought relatively cheaply, while running down its

operations. One operating company broke off its contract in the late '90s and had to sue Nasser's partnership to get fees the hotel had never paid. But Nasser, who maintains residences in New York and Geneva, appears to be quite wealthy, and management negotiators never claimed that the hotel was unable to pay the city-wide terms.

While the union has pressured temporary agencies that have supplied strike-breakers, its leaders recognize that the union is better able to discourage guests from coming to the hotels than to block all replacement workers. Organizer Dan Miller claimed that in the first couple of weeks, picketers turned away about 150 guests and that some nights as few as 10 percent of hotel beds were occupied.

Congress workers, who participated in last year's mobilization even though their contract didn't expire until December, are determined to keep up the fight as long as necessary. "We're looking for getting a contract the same as the other hotels," says negotiating committee member Jose Sanchez, who works as a cook. "We're

very far behind compared to other cities." Tamarin insists that ultimately Congress workers will decide what contract to accept, but many of them see the strategic importance of their fight for others. Henry Miller, a bartender at the hotel for 25 years, says that working conditions have gone downhill under Nasser's ownership. "If we lose this, then three years from now, the other hotels will be coming up for contract, and the other hotels can figure, if the Congress can bust the union, we can do the same thing. ... Give us the contract, or shut the hotel down."

On July 2 hundreds of other hotel workers from around the city and supporters from other unions joined Congress strikers on the picket line. On the same day, workers at a Gelmart apparel factory in the Philippines staged a demonstration in support of them. And by coincidence, a group of hotel executives walked past the Congress picket line as they emerged from an unrelated meeting in a nearby hotel. The message, from Michigan Avenue to east Asia, was loud and clear. ■

Moving on Just Fine

Web site allows women to share positive aspects of abortion

By Eleanor J. Bader

Patricia Beninato spent January 22, 2003, the 30th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, in an Internet chat room, discussing the ruling's significance. During the course of the exchange, something struck her. Virtually every participant became uneasy when asked to acknowledge the positive aspects of abortion.

Beninato was aghast. "The pro-choice crowd was deferring to the pro-life crowd. I couldn't believe it. Yeah, abortion is a wake-up call. When I got pregnant I told myself I'd better be more vigilant about who I sleep with and how I use birth control. But there are millions of us who've had abortions who are not in a corner screaming about pain, guilt, or how old the baby would be if we'd had it. There are lots of us who've gone on with our lives just fine, with no regrets."

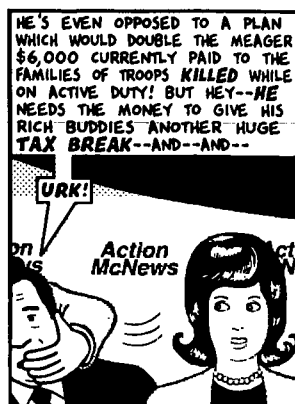
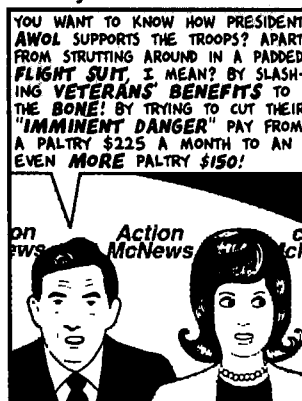
Beninato's dismay prompted her to do an Internet search on abortion. Once more, what she found stunned her: Pro-choice groups are virtually silent about the procedure and its aftermath. Within a week, Beninato had created www.Imnotsorry.net, a Web site where women can speak about positive abortion experiences. "At first I solicited people through a bulletin board," she says. "Now people are hearing about the site through word of mouth and I've been getting one to two new entries a week."

Among them: Colleen, pregnant at 28 due to contraceptive failure, writes, "I had neither regrets at this time nor any time since ... I was so relieved not to be pregnant anymore."

Catherine, who found out she was pregnant eight days after her fourteenth birthday, states, "It wasn't emotionally traumatic. It wasn't an especially hard choice." Now applying to medical school, she tells readers: "I plan to do abortions as part of my practice, to make sure that

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



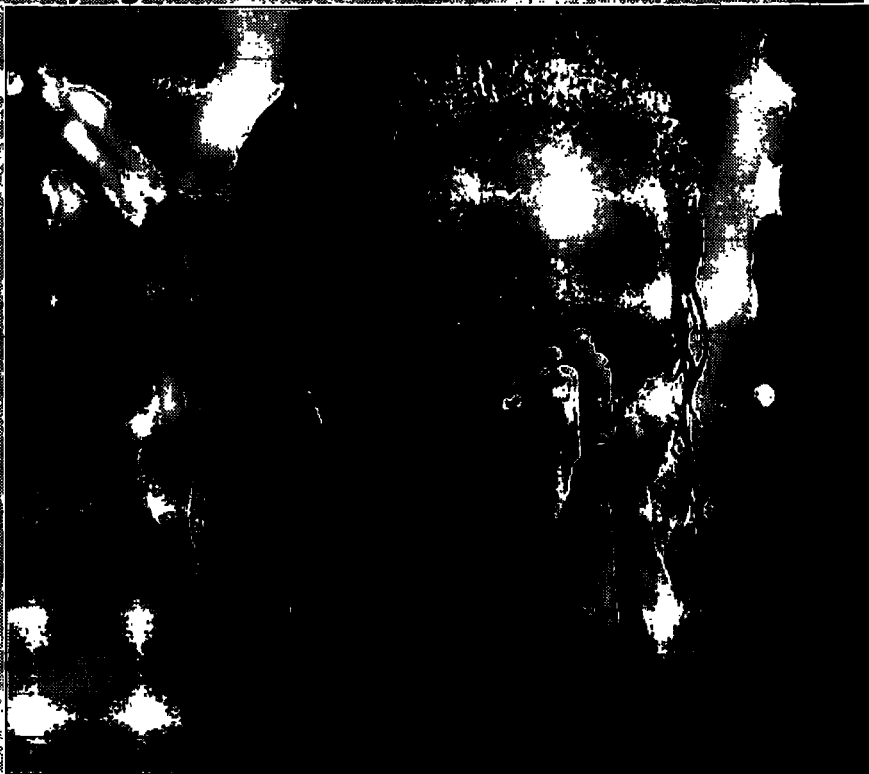
other women have the same chance at finding their dreams that I did."

Brandy, who writes, "I got pregnant at 15 but because I did have the abortion I finished school and currently work in a good career. If I had had the baby I probably would have gotten married, quit school, and stayed in an abusive situation longer than I did for the sake of the child." Nearly three dozen people—from teenagers to middle-aged women with children—posted entries on the site within its first six weeks. "It took a while for the right-to-lifers to notice," laughs Beninato, "but now they've started to put their rants into the guest book. Overall, more than 90 percent of the responses have been positive."

Still, the site is a lone warrior. Those searching the Internet for information on surgical or chemical abortions or post-abortion recovery are likely to find an overwhelming—and terrifying—array of data on Post-Abortion Syndrome (PAS) and Post-Traumatic Abortion Syndrome (PTAS), maladies said to afflict women who end unwanted pregnancies.

To hear these sites—all of them sponsored by anti-abortion organizations—tell it, women who have abortions suffer from symptoms ranging from mild grief to traumatic stress, conditions made manifest by feelings of alienation, anger, depression, guilt, isolation, and shame. Those afflicted by PAS and PTAS are also said

Praying for Peace in Liberia



A woman prays as a U.S. military delegation arrives at the Voa refugee camp in Liberia. On June 17, rebels and the government of President Charles Taylor agreed to a ceasefire in the 10-year civil war that has wracked this West African nation. U.S. ambassador to Liberia John Blaney told camp residents, "We are sorry the conditions are so poor. We will try to help."

IN SHORT

Blogging: The New Liberal Media?

When Google bought Blogger.com earlier this year, it became clear that blogging—as the practice of keeping an online journal is called—was going mainstream.

People have been sharing thoughts online since the mid-'90s, but it wasn't until 1999, when the San Francisco-based Pyra Labs created the free web application Blogger, that the trend started to grow. Originally, www.Blogger.com was created to help companies share information on an internal web server, but the word about the easy-to-use software that required no computer knowledge soon went beyond cubicle walls. Finally, the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the war in Iraq brought blogging into the limelight.

Now media outlets are starting to consider blogs as valuable journalism tools, and so are journalism schools. MSNBC, Fox News, and the *San Jose Mercury News* are only a few that have added blogs to their websites. Blogging has been incorporated in the curriculum of many journalism schools, including Northwestern University and the University of California-Berkeley.

Last fall Paul Grabowicz, director of the New Media Program at

Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism, along with another

Berkeley teacher and *Wired* magazine co-founder John Battelle, introduced Creating an Intellectual Property Weblog, a course on weblogs. "The class was a result of a discussion I had in spring 2002 with leaders in the online, media, and technology areas about what more we should be teaching in our new-media curriculum," Grabowicz says. "Two of the suggestions at that meeting were to cover the growing debate over intellectual property issues, and experimenting more with novel forms of online publishing."

The Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern has been teaching blogging for years, according to Assistant Professor Janice E. Castro, a former managing editor of Time.com and vice president of the Online News Association. "It is growing like a prairie fire," Castro says, "and it is giving many interesting voices a chance to be heard around the Web. Blogging blends journalism and community in interesting ways and breaks down some walls between journalists and communities."

"I think that blogging could be an important part of alternative media, but also hopefully it will be a supplement to more mainstream media," Grabowicz says.

BY ANA HRISTOVA

to suffer from nightmares, auditory hallucinations of babies crying, eating disorders, low self-esteem, physical pain, sexual dysfunction, and sleep disorders. What's more, the sites report that self-mutilation, reckless sexual conduct, and drug and alcohol abuse are rife among women who've aborted.

Maryland Right To Life takes these scare tactics even further. They claim that "100,000 women a year lose a baby they want due to a miscarriage that results from complications of a prior abortion." Even more absurd, David Trosch, a convicted anti-abortion terrorist, warns that "the vast majority of women who have had an abortion ... contemplate, attempt, and ... many of them ... actually commit suicide." Not surprisingly, neither Maryland Right to Life nor Trosch reveal the source of their spurious statistics.

Worse, Trosch and his ilk pay no mind to the fact that the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association have declared neither PAS nor PTAS exist. Undeterred, the antis have also ignored the findings of a recent study by the University of California, Santa Barbara, that found severe post-abortion distress to be rare, affecting fewer than one percent of those who terminate their pregnancies.

Not only that, UCSB researchers found something that may help Beninato establish a niche within the pro-choice community. According to their report, the perceived need to keep abortion secret, because of fear of disapproval, increases stress. In addition, they indicate that the symptoms attributed to PAS and PTAS may, in fact, be a reaction to anti-choice rhetoric spouted by

groups such as American Victims of Abortion, Project Rachel, and Women Exploited by Abortion.

Beninato believes that www.Imnotsorry.net can help women both before and after their abortions by giving them a safe space to vent, ask questions, and celebrate reproductive choice. "I picture a teenager, scared to friggng death about being pregnant, typing in abortion, and getting all these sites telling her how bad she's going to feel if she has the procedure," she says. "I want her to find us, too, and hear real women describe the actual 20-minute procedure. I want her to hear that she can feel happy about having an abortion. I want to make sure she knows that she doesn't have to be intimidated and have babies she doesn't want. I want her to know there's another reality out there." ■

Bagger Bushido [3.5]

Joseph Parker, a 30-year-old grocery bagger at Albertson's in Irvine, California, was described as an erratic and distant person, sometimes mumbling to himself and haranguing his colleagues about religion. One Sunday morning in June, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, Parker walked into the store wearing a green beret and a trench coat. After exchanging a few words with the manager, he drew a three-foot samurai-style sword from under his coat and calmly started hacking away. He stabbed an employee to death and nearly decapitated another before a few brave customers and employees girded themselves with trashcan lids, jars of mayonnaise, and various utensils from the barbecue aisle, and gave chase. Some 10 minutes after beginning his spree, Parker was killed in a hail of fire from a policeman's assault rifle.

"He was a pretty scary-looking dude," a regular store patron commented about the sword-wielding bagger. Albertson's was "good about hiring handicapped

people," the customer added, "but he was a little too over the edge."

Town Creamed

The unlucky citizens of Pirapora, a town of 10,000 in Brazil, have been buried for a month under a vaporous white foam that crept up from the river Tiete, according to Reuters. Pirapora is down a stream from São Paulo, and the foam appears to be a byproduct of the interaction between the water of the local reservoir and the human and industrial pollutants in the Tiete. The creamy goo has been carried by the wind onto roofs and into courtyards, giving Pirapora the carnivalesque appearance of having been covered with mashed potatoes. But the stuff also gives off a harmful acidic gas that causes respiratory problems for the young and the elderly. Government officials have yet to figure out how to get rid of the annoyance.

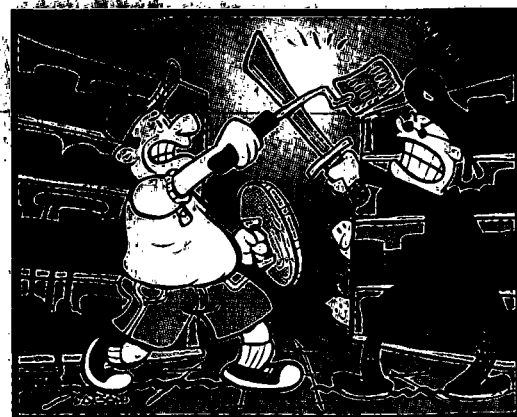
Clearly Channeled [3.8]

A popular former radio personality is suing Clear Channel

Communications, claiming she was fired because she opposed the war in Iraq, according to the *Greenville News*. In April, WMYA-FM 102.5 in Greenville, South Carolina, fired Roxanne Cordonier, who last year was named Radio Personality of the Year by the state's Broadcasters Association. In her suit, Cordonier alleges that last spring, as the United States prepared to invade Iraq, two WMYA personalities, Bill Dove and Howard Hudson, invited her on their show to talk about the impending war. She made the mistake of frankly airing her opposition, for which she was continually belittled by her colleagues on and off the air, before being fired April 7. The suit also alleges that Cordonier was forced to participate in prowar rallies.

Bathroom Breaks are Theft [2.5]

Entertainment executives inhabit a strange moral universe. This is what Jamie Kellner, chairman and CEO of Turner Broadcasting, had to say about TV viewers who tune out commercials: "Your contract with the network when you get the show is you're going to watch the spots. Otherwise you couldn't get the show on an ad-supported basis. Any time you skip a commercial or watch the button you're actually stealing the programming." Funny, I thought everybody knew ads were the best thing on television.



Chile's Media Watchdog

On the same May 12 afternoon that Michael Copps, dissident commissioner for the Federal Communications Commission, was in San Rafael, California, speaking out against the commission's (later successful) efforts to ease media ownership restrictions, veteran Chilean journalist Ernesto Carmona was in nearby Berkeley, California, railing against the media conglomerates in his own country.

The 60-year-old Carmona fled Chile in 1973 to escape the Pinochet regime. Carmona has championed a free and diverse press during his 18-year exile in Venezuela. He returned to his homeland in 1992 to continue his work as an investigative journalist.

In April, he traveled to the Bay Area to promote his latest book, *Los Dueños de Chile* (The Owners of Chile), and to build support for a media watchdog group that he would like to create in Chile on the model of the U.S.-based Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting.

With the help of translator Fernando Torres, Carmona spoke with *In These Times* about his work on the book, his harrowing escape from Pinochet's police, and why he's worried about the American media.

What have you seen in the U.S. media, especially in regard to FCC rule changes, that concerns you?

It's becoming similar to Chile. This [media consolidation] is very dangerous because of the myth about the United States and freedom of expression here. A lot of countries in Latin America base their [media] work on this mythology about the freedom of expression that happens here. ... It will end up being one owner of media here in the United States—one owner, one voice, one opinion. That's the problem we have in Chile right now—there is just one voice in the media.

The Chilean government spends \$18 million [annually] to advertise in newspapers. Of that \$18 million, 80 percent—or about \$14 million—goes to two companies: *El Mercurio*, which has 15 papers throughout the country, and *Copesa*, which operates a large paper in Santiago called *La Tercera*. ... Our struggle is to lower this percentage for those papers and increase the percentage in favor of the independent media.

Your book details the extent to which a handful of corporations and individuals control Chile. How much of that would people read about regularly in *El Mercurio*'s papers or elsewhere?

Very little. There is no debate about this in Chile. There is much debate about things that are not important, like "the rich practice this kind of sport" or "who is a member of this rich club," et cetera, et cetera.

I want to open this debate in a way that is attractive to the common reader-ship. ... Who are these people? What are their names? Where did they come from? How did they become wealthy? There are other people who write about these issues, but they're academics. It's good work, good papers, but the language is not for the public.

I would like to do something that is read by everyone.

What kind of censorship or restrictions did you encounter researching your book?

The major limitation was the price of the information. For instance, it's known that all rivers in Chile, or at least the access rights to the waters, belong to Spanish companies. I went to the Ministry of Public Works, and their obligation is to give out this information, because it's public information, but they charge you for every river: \$5 for every river you want to investigate. In Chile there are more than 1,000 rivers. So if you want to know how many rivers one of these Spanish companies has, you have to have a fortune.

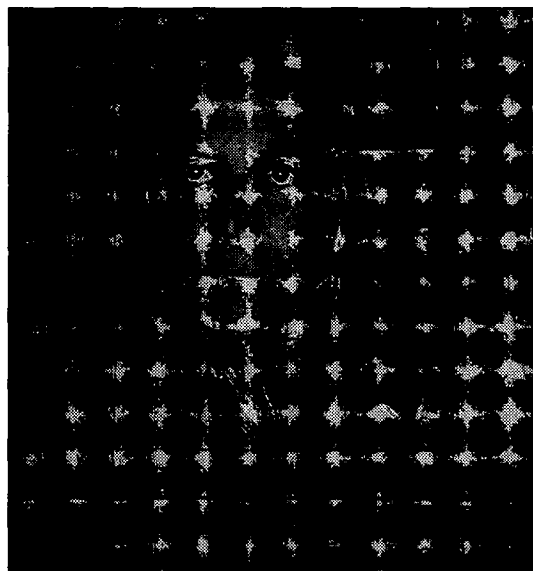
But I haven't run into any legal problems, because all of the information is true.

Why did you have to leave Chile in 1973?

I always wanted to stay in Chile and struggle against dictatorship. But there was a day when I realized I was an important person, and the army was looking for me. I went to the house where my daughter was staying, and the police had left the house only 10 minutes before. They destroyed everything inside the house. (No one was home at the time.) That was when I thought I had to leave the country, to keep myself alive.

I had to pay off a policeman—the chief of police in Santiago. This policeman gave me an ID and I asked him what this person, whose ID I now had, did for a living. The policeman said, "Don't worry, this person is dead." But I still wanted know. So he told me: "He was a drug trafficker."

I couldn't get into Argentina (where Carmona traveled before landing in Venezuela) with an ID like that, because I wanted to dedi-



BRETT SCHAEFFER

Ernesto Carmona

cate myself to journalism. So the policeman told me: "The only solution is to leave Chile with your own name, and on that day we'll lift the order to arrest you."

And they did it. They did it for that day. I went to Argentina with my own name.

What is one thing you'll take back with you from this trip?

I was very surprised, talking to Norman Solomon and other journalists here, to discover this concentration of wealth (in the United States) that, really, I had a different idea about—that it was not structured so vertically.

It also called my attention to the critical spirit of young people who are journalists here. All the journalists I've met who have a critical spirit are also young. [Laughing] For me a young person is from 50 years old down. ■

Affirmative Denial

By Salim Muwakkil

One of the primary reasons I support the congressional bill to study the feasibility of reparations for the descendants of enslaved Africans is the need to acquaint Americans with the devastating effects racial slavery has had on African-Americans.

That need was never more apparent than during national discussions of the Supreme Court's recent affirmative action rulings. In a 5-4 vote, the high court ruled that the University of Michigan law school (and thus all colleges and universities) could constitutionally consider race as a factor in admissions. The court also ruled that the school's undergraduate admissions point system, which awards points for certain racial identities, is unconstitutional.

Progressives applauded the top court's law school ruling as a victory for the forces of social justice. But it was a win by default only. The law school maintained it took race into account to help produce a more diverse student body. Diversity enhanced the university environment, it argued. A slim majority of the court bought that argument, which reasoned, essentially, that minorities should be tolerated because they add texture to whites' educational experience.

Thus it seems that even when the top court acts in the interest of social justice, its motives are tainted by assumptions of racial hierarchy. Other than Ruth Bader Ginsburg, none of the other justices thought it necessary to link structural racial barriers to continued social and economic disparities between black and white Americans. These racial disparities endure, and in some cases have worsened. And remember, affirmative action was a program born specifically to help beat down barriers that cause those disparities.

Ironically, toppling racial barriers also was the *raison d'être* for the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment that foes of affirmative action now use to justify the program's demise. In fact, irony is a consistent theme in this debate: Not only do we have the specter of affirmative action foes quoting Dr. Martin Luther King out of context about the "content of character" rather than the color of skin, we now have Justice Clarence Thomas using

the black abolitionist Frederick Douglass to bolster his anti-affirmative action point.

Quoting Douglass' 1865 speech before the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in Boston, Thomas wrote, "All I ask is, give him ['the Negro'] a chance to stand on his own legs! Let him alone! ... Your interference is doing him positive injury." Thomas failed to mention that Douglass' speech was responding to the patronizing



excesses of many Northern abolitionists, who, at the time, seemed to regard freedmen as so much flotsam and jetsam of the Civil War to be handled, rather than as human beings to be supported.

This recasting of the past is becoming a routine rhetorical tactic of the shameless right, but Americans' lack of historical perspective makes it much easier for them to get away with it. This historical ignorance is the precise target of the congressional bill I mentioned earlier.

This bill, which has been introduced annually by Rep. John Conyers (D-Michigan) since 1989 but languishes in committee, seeks to "establish a commission to examine the institution of slavery ... and economic discrimination against African-Americans ... to make recommendations to the Congress on appropriate remedies."

Few Americans know of the legacy that racial slavery and Jim Crow apartheid has bequeathed to African-Americans. Because of that ignorance, many white Americans either are mystified by blacks' disproportionate miseries or attribute them to some intrinsic quality (be it genetic or cultural). African-Americans often are urged to "get over" race; that is, accept racial inequities as a state of nature and shut up.

A more honest reckoning of our history would reveal the difficulty of transcending racial disadvantage without some attempt to repair the damage done to a people victimized by 16 generations of racial slavery and Jim Crow apartheid.

After all, African-Americans exist only because there was a transatlantic slave trade; racial slavery was a new species of human bondage, now considered one of history's longest-running crimes against humanity. Slavery stole the labor of enslaved Africans for more than 250 years, and by depriving their descendants of any material inheritance—except poverty—slavery also damaged their futures.

Jim Crow apartheid blocked blacks from access to America's fruits for a century following slavery's demise. In fact, African-Americans were not fully enfranchised as citizens until 1965, and racial barriers erected to justify and protect slavery still to this day inhibit blacks' social and economic mobility.

The peculiar institution also severed the ancestral sources of identity and cultural continuity of enslaved Africans, leaving them and their progeny especially vulnera-

Few Americans know of the legacy that racial slavery and Jim Crow apartheid has bequeathed to African-Americans.

ble to the widespread biases of white supremacy and its corollary, black inferiority (including the negative aesthetic values of "kinky" hair, thick lips, and dark skin, as well as notions of intellectual inferiority) that still permeate American society. These Afrophobic biases are also a legacy of slavery, and may have been just as damaging to the psyches of African-Americans as the more overt injuries of social and economic discrimination were to their life chances.

The problem becomes more complex and expensive as the legacy of slavery lengthens; affirmative action is inadequate to the task, even without the equivocal dodge of "diversity." In fact, affirmative action itself is a timid euphemism for reparations. Passing Conyers' bill could help relieve our timidity. ■

Sells Like Teen Spirit

By Ana Marie Cox

The nice thing about living in Washington is that on your way to the mall you can see ads promoting Lockheed-Martin's Super Hercules airplane—"a totally new, advanced, fully integrated digital weapons system." A study by the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania recently found that lobbyists spent \$105 million during the 107th Congress on such advertising—designed for members of Congress, not the public.

The nice thing about living in New York is that you can go see Josh Hartnett expound on the future of the Democratic Party. Talk about making love and not war.

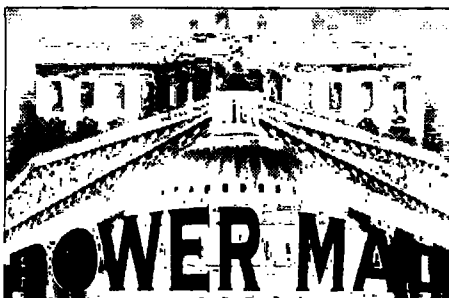
The Dems could do worse. Hartnett looks better in a swimsuit than John Edwards, even. He's adorable, he's a Midwesterner, and last month he appeared on a panel at the 92nd Street Y with other noted political science scholars, including novelist Walter Mosley and actress Janeane Garofalo. But the real draw that night was Danny Goldberg, music mogul-cum-campaign strategist and author of *Dispatches from the Culture Wars: How the Left Lost Teen Spirit*.

Goldberg is not completely off-base when he argues that the Democrats should go after young folks. One way to do that would be to emphasize the points of clear distinction between the left and the right on social issues, like, er ... the war! Well, perhaps that's not such a clearcut issue for the party. OK: gay marriage. Uh, no, there are two Democrats co-sponsoring the constitutional amendment defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman. Hmm ... welfare reform? Nope. Wait—I got it: rap music.

That's right, Goldberg thinks the key to Democratic victory is to "embrace popular culture." He rails against those Democrats he labels as the "new Puritans," whose attacks on violence in the media risk alienating an entire generation. In a particularly nifty bit of rhetorical spin, he posits that vilifying popular culture is so dumb that even Republicans know not to do it. As he told *Salon*: "There were no Republican senators who signed on to the Lieberman bill that would have had the

Federal Trade Commission regulate entertainment. Why? I mean, they thought about this and they said, 'You know what? Let the Democrats have this one.'"

Goldberg is referring to the Media Marketing Accountability Act of 2001, co-sponsored by Sens. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut and Hillary Clinton of New York. The bill, it's true, had no Republican co-sponsors, but a similar bill in 2000 was



co-sponsored by Republicans Sam Brownback of Kansas and Orrin Hatch of Utah (talk about your new Puritans). The bill is hardly perfect, but it's hardly an Ashcroftian menace to civil rights—or, as Goldberg put it, "a bill that edged closer to government censorship of the arts than anything proposed since the '30s."

The MMAA—which passed in both the House and Senate but was not signed by President Bush—would have endowed the FTC with the power to regulate the marketing of violent material to young people, hardly a right-wing conspiracy—if anything, a positively socialist agenda. Commercial Alert, the marketing watchdog of Ralph Nader's Public Citizen group, proposed the idea in 1999. When I attended the media violence hearings on the Hill in 2000, some of the most vocal critics of this approach weren't the new Puritans, but rather the old capitalists. Before he came around and co-sponsored the Brownback-Hatch bill, Sen. John McCain, Republican of Arizona, demurred, "As a defender of the free market I do not begrudge anyone's honest profits."

The problem depends on your definition of honest profits, I guess. Selling "Grand Theft Auto: Vice City" to 11-year-olds doesn't seem particularly honest to me.

Goldberg testified at those media violence hearings, wrapping himself in the flag and the First Amendment and what-not—a preview of what he goes on about at great length in his book, playing the whole thing as a metaphor for how anyone who would criticize pop culture is, like, a square. He told *Salon* that old people should get over themselves already: "Nothing is going to touch me the way Bob Dylan's *Blonde on Blonde* touched me then. But today, to my daughter, Pink is somebody she's going to remember 30 years from now. Kids who like the White Stripes, or like Jay-Z or Eminem, these are artists who are touching them in a similar way. They're 16, and we're not."

This is all very noble until you think about how much money Goldberg stood to lose if the FTC had decided to again enforce the kind of "safe harbor" regulations that, for decades, kept Saturday morning television from becoming the branded virtual toy store it is today, or if it had decided to clamp down on the predatory marketing of graphic, violent games and music.

Selling "Grand Theft Auto: Vice City" to 11-year-olds doesn't seem particularly honest to me.

In calling for Democrats to re-engage with the culture war, Goldberg deliberately confuses art and the market in a way that's familiar to anyone who's seen Britney drink a Pepsi or seen Cadillac Escalades blown away by the wrath of a Matrixed Keanu Reeves. Violence is hardly the point, actually: The deep association between culture and commerce is. Real progressives look askance at this connection, and progressive young people do, too. It's no coincidence that the causes young people have flocked to over the past few years—from antisweatshop activism to anti-Starbucks bumper stickers—explicitly seek to disrupt corporate control over the public sphere.

Don't get me wrong. I don't want defense contractors hijacking my government. But I don't want record executives to, either. ■



By Joel Bleifuss

Raptors Among Us

Paul Wolfowitz, the deputy secretary of defense and a leader of a group of Pentagon officials who refer to themselves as "the Cabal," has established a surveillance database known as Talon to collect "raw, non-validated" reports of "anomalous activities" filed "by concerned citizens and military members regarding suspicious incidents." In a May 2 memo to top Pentagon officials, Wolfowitz instructed the heads of military departments and agencies to begin producing Talon reports immediately and forward them to the department's Counterintelligence Field Activity office, which in turn will load those reports into a Defense Intelligence Agency and Joint Intelligence Task Force Combating Terrorism database. The precursor of Talon is the Air Force's Eagle Eyes, a program run out of the Office of Special Investigations, which, according to the OSI Web site, "enlists the eyes and ears of Air Force members and citizens in the war on terror."

Talon is also disturbingly similar to Attorney General John Ashcroft's ill-fated Operation TIPS, a program to get patriotic citizens who have regular contact with the public involved in reporting suspicious activities to the Justice Department.

"It sounds like it could be very much like TIPS," says Lee Tien, the staff attorney for the Electronic Frontier Foundation. "The fundamental idea of TIPS is that everyone ends up reporting suspicious activities, but with a lack of safeguards. As anyone who has worked in the courts knows, eyewitness reporting is extremely unreliable. So there is a data quality problem. How good is the data you are relying on? And what about people who want to abuse the system? In a nation of snitches it is very easy for people



Critics of the Pentagon's plans to foment a popular uprising in Iran fear that U.S. covert operations could discredit an already thriving prodemocracy movement. Above, protesters sit in the corridor of Evin prison in Tehran after being detained during antigovernment demonstrations on June 15.

to say discrediting things about others, and if there is no verification, you can ruin someone's reputation or harm their privacy by saying things that are untrue or, perhaps more subtly, things that are ambiguous. That can have major consequences on someone's life, and everyone should be concerned about that kind of thing happening. I think it is very dangerous."

Hearing Voices

George W. Bush is talking with God. According to Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, during the June summit with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Abbas, Bush made the following statement: "God told me to strike at al-Qaeda and I struck them, and then He instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did, and now I am determined to solve the problem in the Middle East. If you help me, I will act, and if not, the elec-

tions will come and I will have to focus on them." This report of our president's providential communications comes from the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, which obtained a transcript of a negotiating session between Abbas and leaders of Hamas and other extremist Palestinian groups, in which the Palestinian prime minister related the above statement. It was not clear whether Bush's 2004 re-election campaign is also divinely inspired.

Oh Lord Won't You Find Me a WMD

So far, God has failed to tell Bush where Saddam has hidden his weapons of mass destruction. Remember those two mobile germ warfare labs, the photos of which have graced the *New York Times* front page? On June 1, George W. Bush heralded this discovery: "Yes, we found a biological laboratory in Iraq which the United Nations

prohibited." However, a British biological weapons expert who examined the trailers told the *Observer* of London: "They are not mobile germ warfare laboratories. You could not use them for making biological weapons. They do not even look like them. They are exactly what the Iraqis said they were—facilities for the production of hydrogen gas to fill balloons."

Part of the Plan

Five hours after the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center, Gen. Wesley Clark received a call from a White House official. Clark, who didn't name names, told *Meet the Press*' Tim Russert on June 15, "I was on CNN, and I got a call at my home saying, 'You got to say this is connected. This is state-sponsored terrorism. This has to be connected to Saddam Hussein.' I said, 'I'm willing to say it, but what's your evidence?' And I never got any evidence."

Changing a Q to an N

The Bush administration has clearly set its sights on Iran as the next oil-rich nation in need of regime change. To that end, the Pentagon, under the leadership of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, is reportedly pushing for massive covert operations against the Iranian government, according to Jim Lobe, writing in the *Asia Times*.

The State Department is concerned because Wolfowitz wants to forge an alliance with the Mujahedeen Khalq, a heavily armed Iranian opposition group that was backed by Saddam Hussein and is officially on the U.S. list of terrorist groups.

In addition, he and other administration neocons are cultivating the support of Iranian monarchists who are calling for the return of Reza Pahlavi, the son of the deposed and now deceased Shah. *The Forward*, a Jewish newspaper, reports that Pahlavi is in touch with senior officials in Israel's Likud government, for whom some of the Pentagon's neocons once worked.

The right-wing press has signed on to this neocon cause. As early as November 26, 2001, the American Enterprise Institute's Michael Ledeen wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Iran is ready to blow sky-high. The Iranian people need only a bright spark of courage from the United States to ignite the flames of democratic revolution."

And William Kristol, the *Weekly Standard* editor, wrote on May 5 that the United States was "already in a death struggle with Iran over the future of Iraq" and that "the next great battle—not, we hope, a military battle—will be for Iran."

The strategy was elaborated at the American Enterprise Institute's May 6 conference, "The Future of Iran: Monarchy, Democracy, and the War on Terror." Israeli-born Meyrav Wurmser (whose husband David is in the Bush administration) convened the conference. She said in part:

Our fight against Iraq was only one battle in a long war. It would be ill-conceived to think that we can deal with Iraq alone. ... We must move on, and faster. ... It was a grave error to send [U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad] to secret meetings with representatives of the Iranian government in recent weeks. ... Rather than coming as victors who should be feared and respected rather than loved, we are still engaged in old diplomacy, in the kind of politics that led to the attacks of September 11.

On May 12, to the dismay of State Department officials, the White House broke off informal dialogue with representatives of Iranian President Mohamed Khatami over Iraq and Afghanistan. The administration's neocons have charged that Iran has been harboring al-Qaeda terrorists, an allegation that neither the State Department nor the Central Intelligence Agency has endorsed.

One week later, Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kansas) introduced the Iran Democracy Act, which sets as U.S. policy the goal of "an internationally monitored referendum to allow the Iranian people to peacefully change their system of government." Said Brownback: "Now is not the time to coddle this terrorist regime. Now is the time to stand firm and support the people of Iran—who are the only ones that can win this important battle."

All this White House scaremongering, amplified by a kowtowing media, is apparently working. A *Washington Post*-ABC News poll has found that 56 percent of Americans support a military attack on Iran to stop that country from developing nuclear weapons. However, a large percentage of those surveyed are abysmally ignorant. The same poll found that about 25 percent believe Iraq had used chemical and biological weapons against American troops, and another 15 percent were not sure whether Iraq had or not. All of which should give George W. Bush hope for his 2004 re-election efforts.

Job Opening

"Do hands-on work" and "travel worldwide" are two of the enticements offered in a recent job posting on the CIA's Web site, which reads in part: "The Central Intelligence Agency is seeking locksmiths to work with the best minds in the country while performing a mission critical to our nation. ... Knowledge of electronic and manual safe lock servicing, electricity, and alarms is ideal. Knowing how to operate machinery to fabricate lock parts and tools will be beneficial." ■

MARTHA STEWART Living
 Simple Decorating for Small Spaces
 Special Linens for Cot-sized Beds
 The Zen of Concrete
 Work where you live. Live where you work
 Easy Cocktail Party
 to meet the new
 Neighbors

If Martha Stewart ends up behind bars for insider trading, will she make the most of it?

THE CHANGING FACE OF AIDS

Young black men bear the brunt of the epidemic

By Karen Hawkins

I was sleeping around with people to fit in. To build up my self-esteem. I knew what I was doing, but I wasn't taking ownership of it," says Nathaniel Marshall matter-of-factly. "To fit in is every young person's dream, but it's another thing when you compromise your integrity."

With an ease gained from telling his story for a living, Marshall describes the situations that left him 21 years old and HIV-positive. Now 24 and a peer advocate for HIV-positive and at-risk youth on Chicago's South Side, Marshall hopes his story will keep other youth from making the harmful choices that he did. "When a youth sees someone in their age range say, 'I'm HIV-positive,' it makes them stop and say, 'OK, that could've been me,'" he says. "If I can touch one person's life, I have done my job—two lives, I'm ecstatic."

When Marshall discovered he had HIV in March of 2000, he joined one of the 20-year-old epidemic's hardest-hit populations: young, black, urban men who have sex with men but don't necessarily identify themselves as "gay." In 2001, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a study indicating that as many as 30 percent of young, urban, African-American men who have sex with men were HIV-positive. From CNN to the *New York Times*, the media reported these alarming numbers and speculated about how they got so high so suddenly. But to many AIDS service providers and gay activists, the numbers came as no surprise. "There is a crisis among young men," says David Munar of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago. "Prob-

ably 12 to 15 years ago, we knew that this is where the epidemic was headed." HIV-positive author and activist Chris Bell blames the media for failing to sound the alarm about the HIV rate among young black men. "The thing that really galls me is that it isn't a new statistic," he says, but only now have the media "decided it's a worthy population to look at."

For many working in HIV/AIDS prevention, the numbers underscore an unfortunate truth: Because many young black men who have sex with men don't identify themselves as gay or bisexual, they are a difficult group to reach. Innumerable factors play into this difficulty, including racism, class bias, and homophobia. "It's not like there's really one thing," Bell says. "It's the culmination of all that."

The CDC based its estimate on a six-city study in Baltimore, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, Seattle, and New York. The study found that Latinos are also disproportionately affected, with infection rates of up to 15 percent for young, urban men who have sex with men. Though Chicago was not one of the cities included in the study, service providers and advocates have said they believe the numbers there likely conform to those found by the CDC. The Chicago Department of Public Health estimates 28,000 HIV-positive people live in the city, with 7,000 to 8,000 unaware of their HIV status. Of the 1,300 African-American men diagnosed with AIDS in Chicago between 1997 and 1999, nearly 43 percent reported unprotected sex with another man as their likely mode of transmission.

AIDS has hit the entire black community disproportionately hard, regardless of gender or sexual orientation. African-Americans

are 15 percent of the population in Illinois but make up 45 percent of all AIDS cases. AIDS is now the leading cause of death for African-American men between the ages of 25 and 44. If the HIV infection rates suggested by the CDC study are indicative of all of the country's urban centers, it would mean HIV infection rate among young black men who have sex with men may be 30 percent—as bad as infections rates in sub-Saharan Africa.

'Like a plane hitting the Twin Towers'

When HIV and AIDS first emerged in the United States more than 20 years ago, the epidemic struck first and fiercest at two populations—white gay men and intravenous drug users of all colors. While the government was slow to respond, the gay community reacted quickly, building an infrastructure of resources and support, including the founding of organizations such as Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) in New York City in 1982.

Frank Oldham Jr. remembers the early days at GMHC and the mood in the gay community at the time. "What was happening then is not happening now," he says. "Gay men were immersed in AIDS intervention and prevention. It became the norm to practice safe sex. [We] eroticized safer sex. I believe that for a period of time this saved lives."

Oldham recently stepped down as executive director of Horizons Community Services, a gay and lesbian agency on Chicago's north side. He is also the former head of the Chicago Department of Public Health's division of HIV/STD/AIDS, and he has worked on AIDS prevention projects for New York City and Washington.

Oldham says the figures for young black men have left him reeling. "As an African-American gay man—and I am HIV-positive—it's like a plane hitting the Twin Towers," he says. "You mean to tell me that our programs are so ineffective that we can't reach African-American men? That's an abomination."

Early AIDS prevention messages were targeted heavily at the white gay community, leaving the rest of country—including blacks—convinced that AIDS wasn't their problem. Marshall, the peer advocate, acknowledges that he knew about HIV and AIDS before he became infected but said he considered it to be a "gay white man's disease."

He remembers having a strong reaction to the film *Philadelphia*, in which Tom Hanks plays a gay, HIV-positive attorney who accuses his law firm of firing him because of his HIV status. "I was scared to death," Marshall says of the film, yet he walked away thinking, "that's not going to happen to me."

Munar, of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, says minority populations fell through the cracks early on. "We were late in getting to people of color," he says. Once it became clear that the numbers had shifted, activists and advocates found that the same methods used to reach white gay men just wouldn't work in other communities.

A question of identity

Because so many young black men who engage in sexual activity with other men don't identify themselves as gay or bisexual, public health messages targeted to gays don't reach them.

According to the CDC's 2001 multi-city study, black men were the most likely to be infected with HIV and the least likely

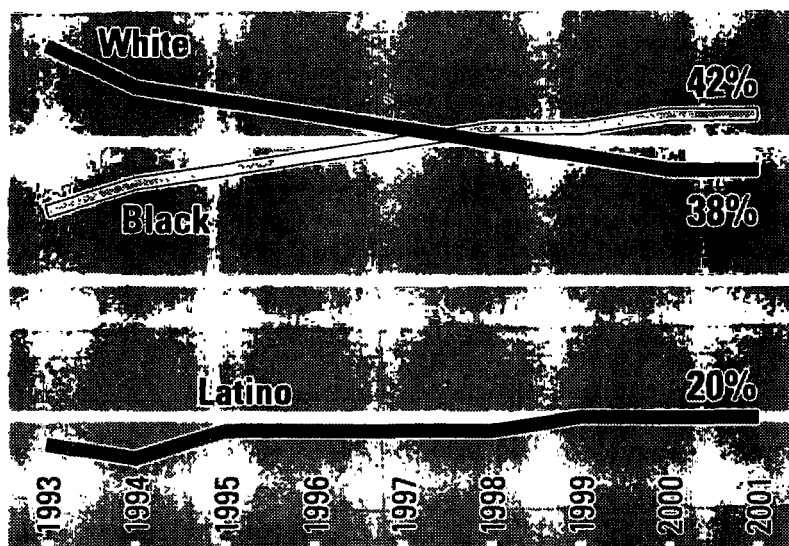
to know that they were HIV-positive. Another CDC study released at the International AIDS Conference in Barcelona, Spain, in July 2002 reported that 91 percent of the young, black, HIV-positive men didn't know they were infected.

Young black men engaging in risky sexual behaviors lack the infrastructure found in the white gay community, where early outreach efforts were aimed at bars, bathhouses, and community centers. "In some ways, it's really true that there's nowhere for them to gather," Munar said. "The (public) congregating places aren't in place."

The heterosexual black community is gradually, and increasingly, responding to the HIV and AIDS crisis—though with nothing approaching the fervor of the gay community.

On Chicago's South Side, Trinity United Church of Christ's HIV/AIDS Support Ministry was founded in December 1993 by

Percentage of persons living with AIDS



SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

a black woman whose brother had died of AIDS and who was frustrated by the lack of support and acknowledgement in the church community. Other churches have also begun to address the issue. Marshall says he has been continually surprised by the support he has received at Sweet Holy Spirit Full Gospel Baptist Church, another large African-American congregation. His pastor, whom he had been afraid to tell of his status, simply told him, "We don't care about the disease, we care about the person."

The most visible effort in the black community is being led by the Rev. Jesse Jackson and his civil-rights organization Rainbow PUSH. For the last several years, PUSH's annual convention in Chicago has featured a televised forum on HIV and AIDS that is shown on cable's Black Entertainment Television (BET). Jackson has also headed several public calls for widespread HIV testing in the black community, often getting black ministers to join him as he submits to the test himself.

However, most HIV prevention efforts in the black community are aimed at heterosexual women—the newest "innocent victims" of the epidemic—while demonizing those who many blame for bringing the disease into the black community—men who have sex with men. Even public health prevention messages are not immune from this bias. In the spring and summer of 2000, the Chicago Department of Public Health rolled out an HIV prevention campaign targeted at

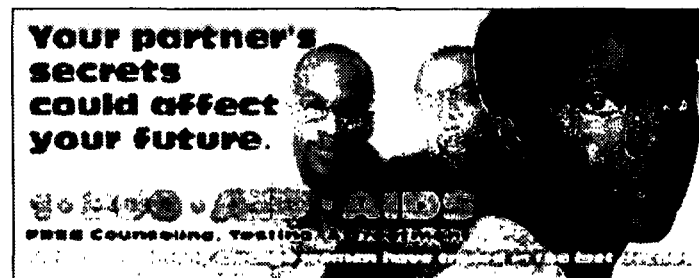
women of color. One of the campaign's billboards featured a black woman in the foreground of a photo that included two shadowy black men standing ominously behind her. The billboard's tagline suggested that women should be aware of all of their partner's partners and included a helpline phone number. The ad angered many in the gay community, who objected to the ad's unspoken indictment of black men who have sex with both men and women. What is necessary, they say, is to challenge the prejudice that compels many men to keep their intimate relationships with men secret.

Author Chris Bell, who tested positive for HIV when he was 23, says the black community isn't yet ready to address sex between men as openly as it should. "There's always a fine line between what you can and cannot do," he says, "but there is no line between who can and can't get HIV."

'On the down low'

"Men on the down low" is an expression heard often in discussions of HIV and AIDS in the black community. The phrase refers to heterosexually identified men who have sex with men on the "down low"—hiding their sexual relationships from their friends, families, and, most importantly, wives and girlfriends. The phenomenon is more common than many might think. One study published in the April 2002 edition of the *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes* sheds light on the sexual behaviors and identities of a select sample of young black men in Los Angeles County. Among men who identified themselves as heterosexual, 31 percent of those who were HIV-positive and 16 percent of those who were HIV-negative reported having had anal sex with men. In the same sample, 46 percent of the HIV-positive men and 37 percent of the HIV-negative men also reported having had anal sex with women with "infrequent condom use."

The black press and entertainment industry have sensationalized this phenomenon, which has become the subject of novels and TV shows, in an effort to attract a black female audience.



A timely tip or a case of scapegoating?

Black activists seem content to make so-called down-low men the scapegoat, blaming the epidemic's spread in the community almost entirely on them, however falsely.

Activist and HIV-prevention educator J.L. King, himself formerly a man on the down low, is a popular speaker and author in the black community who talks openly about the down-low phenomenon. King, who appears at conferences around the country, collects fees of up to \$10,000 for his talks. His workshop topics include "Five Personality Types of Down-Low Men" and "Down Low on the Internet." His workshops balance prevention messages aimed at down-low men, the women they sleep with, and the public health providers attempting to reach them.

Still King, through his Web site, www.livingdownlow.com and through his booking agent www.blackspeakers.net, perpet-

uates the idea that black men who have sex with men are entirely to blame for HIV and AIDS in the black community. King's biography on www.blackspeakers.net describes him as "a nationally recognized 'face' of African American men who, according to the Centers for Disease Control, are the No. 1 reason that African-American women represent 68 percent of new HIV cases."

Public health advocates disagree with these kinds of assertions.

"The Chicago data do not bear out that the down-low factor is the leading cause of HIV infection," Munar says. Homophobic outrage at down-low men masks another serious problem, intravenous drug use. Mark Ishaug, executive director of the AIDS Foundation, says the down-low phenomenon is "clearly an issue, and it's clearly a problem, but it's not the only problem." The stress on it "makes it hard to deal with the substance abuse issue, and pushes people into the closet."

Seldom do discussions of men on the down low address the reasons so many black men choose to stay in the closet in the first place—racism in the white gay community, homophobia in the black community, and societal pressures to have families. And time and money spent on looking at men on the down low represents resources not being spent on looking at the impact of drug abuse.

Not the biggest problem, just on the list

It isn't surprising that black leaders are unwilling to deal with the drug issue, says Munar. "If people are skittish about talking about sex, they're really skittish talking about drugs."

Since the AIDS epidemic began, intravenous drug use has been the second leading cause of transmission, next to unprotected sex between men. But the issue has received a fraction of the attention paid to sexual transmission, ignoring the impact of drugs on HIV in communities of color. In Chicago between 1997 and 1999, more than 30 percent of the black men who were diagnosed with AIDS acknowledged that they were injecting drugs. According to the Illinois-based Coalition for Responsible Syringe Policy, people of color make up the majority of intravenous drug users with AIDS. And the Chicago Department of Public Health reports that from 1995 to 1997, African-Americans and Latinos accounted for 88 percent of AIDS cases among injection drug users. Furthermore, 54 percent of women who reported an AIDS diagnosis in Chicago between 1995 and 1997 admitted to injecting drugs, while a further 18 percent did not inject drugs but reported unprotected sex with an intravenous drug user as the likely source of infection.

Perhaps the greatest barrier to reaching young black men with messages of HIV prevention and education is the conditions in which many of them live. "The real culprit in all of this is poverty," says Oldham. A third of African-American males are in prison, on



parole, or on probation. "You have a formula for sickness and death in the United States, and that's what's appalling."

For young black males, says Munar, "HIV is a problem, but not the leading problem. It's just on the list." Poverty and the many ills it brings, compounded by lack of access to information and health care, can ultimately lead young black men not to value their lives.

"People make decisions in their sex lives that are related to other parts of their lives," says Mark Ishaug. Prevention programs that work are ones that "are holistic and not about prevention per se," he says. Successful programs "talk about the whole person and their needs and talk about self-care, how to get and keep a job, and how to treat family. It's so complicated."

Many young men are drawn to older partners who may take advantage of their ignorance about sex and HIV. Marshall, the peer advocate, says he sees youth who are "focused on finding someone to take care of them without really looking at the cost."

Enormously under-resourced

Ultimately, the key component missing from HIV-prevention programs for black men is money. HIV prevention is "enormously under-resourced. Dollars are being stretched to the max," Munar says. "We can't squeeze more blood out of this stone."

At the same time, it is becoming increasingly difficult to get

Health worker Cynthia Davis administers an oral HIV test to a man at a mobile testing facility as a part of an effort to educate the African-American community of Los Angeles about HIV and AIDS.

resources from the federal government and from private funders. "I think fatigue is a big issue," says Ishaug. "Donors are tired of giving to prevention because people are still getting HIV."

Health-care providers say they have ideas about what needs to be done to reach the populations hardest hit by HIV but who can't afford to implement them.

"This is a billion-dollar issue, and [in Chicago] we have three to four million dollars," Ishaug says. "Clearly, prevention takes a village, and clearly, the [current] providers are not a big enough village." ■

Karen Hawkins is a George Washington Williams fellow and a writer in Chicago whose work has appeared in *Windy City Times* and *Curve*. This article was produced under the 2003 George Washington Williams Fellowship for Journalists of Color, a project sponsored by the Independent Press Association.

Author's note: Nathaniel Marshall's partner of five years, James Simmons, passed away the morning after I interviewed him. Marshall has asked that this article be dedicated to him.

OUR LIVING CONSTITUTION

By Eric Foner

Lawrence v. Texas gives new meaning to American freedom

The June 24 Supreme Court decision, *Lawrence v. Texas*, overturning a Texas sodomy law is a major victory not only for human rights, but for a view of the Constitution as a “living” document whose protections expand as society changes. It marks a stunning repudiation by a conservative court of the idea that constitutional interpretation must rest on the “original intent” of the Founding Fathers, or on a narrow reading of the document’s text.

In his majority opinion, Justice Anthony Kennedy offered an impassioned reaffirmation of the principle that a constitutional right to privacy prohibits the government from imposing a single moral viewpoint on all Americans. This idea is a relatively recent addition to constitutional law.

The development of the modern right to privacy began with now forgotten cases from the '20s in which the court overturned state laws, inspired by the nativist hysteria of World War I, that required all students to attend public schools and prohibited teaching in any language other than English. The court interpreted the 14th Amendment’s guarantee of equal liberty to include the right to “marry, establish a home, bring up children,” and practice religion as one chose, “without interference from the state.”

In the '60s, the Warren court extended the right to privacy into the most intimate realms of life. Justice William O. Douglas, who wrote the majority opinion that overturned a state law prohibiting the use of

contraceptives, argued that despite the absence of the word “privacy” from the Constitution’s text, a protected “zone of privacy” within marriage could be inferred from the “penumbras” of the Bill of Rights and 14th Amendment.

Douglas linked privacy to the sanctity of marriage. But the court soon transformed it into a right of individuals, extending access to birth control to unmarried adults and ultimately to minors. These decisions led directly to *Roe v. Wade*, which created a constitutional right to terminate a pregnancy. The expansion of the right to privacy halted abruptly in 1986, when the court in *Bowers v. Hardwick* upheld a Georgia law that criminalized homosexual acts. The decision this week resumed the process by which the right to privacy expands to include more and more Americans.

Kennedy reminds us that every generation of Americans can invoke the language of the Constitution “in their own search for greater freedom.” It is worth remembering, however, that the original Constitution was primarily concerned not with the rights of citizens but with federal-state relations and the rights of property. It was the 14th Amendment, ratified during the Reconstruction era that followed the Civil War, that transformed the Constitution into a vehicle through which members of vulnerable minorities could stake a claim to freedom and seek protection against governmental misconduct.

It is not so much the text of the Constitution as struggles by stigmatized and excluded groups to enjoy freedom as they

understand it that has expanded Americans’ rights. The 14th Amendment, which put the principle of equality among citizens into the Constitution, would never have been possible except for the long crusade against slavery. A movement by Catholic and immigrant parents to protect their parochial schools and native languages in the '20s persuaded the court to lay the foundations for the constitutional right to privacy.

The second wave of feminism in the '60s, which insisted that sexual relations and conditions of marriage are as much “political” questions as war, civil rights, and class oppression, paved the way to *Roe v. Wade*. The scope and militancy of the movement for gay rights over the past generation changed society’s view of homosexuality, expanded the idea of freedom to include sexual orientation, and made the Supreme Court ruling possible. The decision reminds us that while conservatives have enjoyed striking success in their economic and military agenda, they have found it impossible to reverse the cultural revolution unleashed by the '60s.

In celebrating the court’s ruling, we should also pay tribute to the members of the Reconstruction Congress, who repudiated the heritage of slavery and racism to write into the Constitution the principle of equal rights for all Americans, and to the feminist and gay movements of the past 30 years, which have given new meaning to American freedom.

Eric Foner is DeWitt Clinton Professor of History at Columbia University.



THE SUPREMES & GAY RIGHTS

A closer look at Lawrence v. Texas

By Vincent J. Samar

Lead attorney Ruth Harlow outside the U.S. Supreme Court after it struck down a Texas antisodomy law.

Much to the surprise of legal commentators and many in the lesbian and gay community, the Supreme Court has issued a landmark gay-positive decision in *Lawrence v. Texas*. The decision is significant beyond its narrow ruling applying specifically to laws that criminalize same-sex adult behavior in private. The court's rationale would seem also to disdain laws that allow discrimination in employment, parenting, and marriage.

Lawrence presented a fact pattern that was closely analogous to the court's infamous *Bowers v. Hardwick* decision, which upheld a Georgia law criminalizing homosexual acts. On the evening of September 17, 1998, Harris County, Texas, sheriff's officers entered the home of John Lawrence. Much like what had occurred in *Bowers* 16 years earlier, the officers found Lawrence and Tyron Garner engaged in sodomy in Lawrence's bedroom, except now it was anal sex, not oral sex; the state was Texas, not Georgia; and the social position of gays in society had become more acceptable. Nevertheless, the two men were arrested, charged with violating the state's Homosexual Conduct Law, and jailed overnight. Although the time served and the subsequent fine were comparatively small, the

implications of having such a law on the books were substantial. Not only did the law make people who engage in private gay sex criminals, it rendered people thought to engage in such activities unsuitable for many kinds of work.

The state of Texas could offer few reasons for criminalizing same-sex behavior other than the feeling shared by a part of the public that homosexuality violates moral decency. As a consequence, the Supreme Court took the stunning, almost unprecedented step of overruling in less than 17 years its earlier holding in *Bowers*. The majority opinion, written by Justice Anthony Kennedy, stated: "*Bowers* was not correct when it was decided, and it is not correct today. ... [It] should be and now is overruled."

The court's rationale was a return to the substantive due process considerations of the past. But in a larger sense it was a moral argument in which the court identifies a liberty (not directly mentioned in the constitution) that it believes is fundamental to human autonomy. The court recognized that a line of cases beginning with *Griswold v. Connecticut*, which struck down a law prohibiting married couples from using contraceptives, through *Roe v. Wade*, which held that a woman has a right to choose abortion, was not consistent with its holding in *Bowers*. "The right to make certain decisions regarding sexual conduct

extends beyond the marital relationship," the court said. "The Due Process Clause has a substantive dimension of fundamental significance in defining the rights of the person."

The court also noted that Bowers had failed to understand the significance of the question of liberty that is integral to adult, consensual, noncommercial sexual acts, including homosexual acts. That interest in liberty was not in performing the act itself, but in the intimate relationship that performance of the act with another adult created, for it was that relationship that could become an important part of their mutual self-identities. At the time of *Bowers*, Justice Byron White, writing the majority opinion, had failed to see this connection when he wrote, "Proscriptions against that conduct [sodomy] have ancient roots." Similarly, Chief Justice Warren Burger claimed that "condemnation of [homosexual] practices is firmly rooted in Judeo-Christian moral and ethical standards." In contrast to this narrower language, Justice Kennedy cited a number of scholars who noted that prior to *Bowers* the legal and cultural history of same-sex sodomy condemnations was far less consistent and far more circumscribed.

Kennedy continued, "The issue is whether the majority may use the power of the state to enforce these [particular moral] views on the whole society through operation of the criminal law." Noting that society had moved far beyond such paternalistic considerations, Kennedy added, "We think that our laws and traditions in the past half-century ... show an emerging awareness that liberty gives substantive protection to adult persons in deciding how to conduct their private lives in matters pertaining to sex."

More surprising was Kennedy's invocation that Western Europe had years earlier struck down such laws. Kennedy's extraterritorial references are significant in that they acknowledge that the issue the court is dealing with had already become part of a much larger international way of thinking about human dignity and the way humans deserved to be treated simply by being human. In the United States, this notion was enunciated in the case of *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*, which upheld the abortion decision in *Roe v. Wade*, and *Romer v. Evans*, which struck down Colorado's state constitutional amendment that prevented its legislature or municipalities from passing antidiscrimination statutes in favor of gays, lesbians, or bisexuals. In *Casey* the court said that at the heart of the due process clause was a deep-seated connection between the value of personal dignity and human autonomy. In *Romer* the court said that a law "born of animosity toward the class of persons affected" could never provide a basis for discrimination.

Such moral thinking by the Court is not that unusual, except that in this case it represents an appeal to a much broader level of moral concern. The court's holding in *Lawrence* clearly repudiated the view that, in the words of dissenting Justice Antonin Scalia, "a particular practice [traditionally viewed] as immoral ... could be a sufficient reason for upholding the practice." In its place the court substituted a constitutional foundation—and a broad moral vision—that is far more inclusive of the various ways different people might frame their lives. The court quoted *Casey*: "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life." What made *Bowers* so wrong, according to the court majority, was that its "continuance as precedent demeans the lives of homosexual persons," both by denying

them respect and by putting them in a position to be discriminated against in a way that heterosexuals are not. In Justice Kennedy's words: "The case does involve two adults who, with full and mutual consent from each other, engaged in sexual practices common to a homosexual lifestyle. [Lawrence and Garner] are entitled to respect for their private lives."

Although the majority's opinion didn't directly engage the question of equal protection, Justice O'Connor's did, but without overruling *Bowers* (perhaps because she did not want to reverse a decision she had earlier participated in creating). Still, even in Kennedy's majority opinion, equal protection's presence could be felt in such phrases as "treating like cases alike" and "rendering to each that which is their due."

Kennedy's majority opinion undercuts Scalia's claim that no fundamental right warranting a higher level of scrutiny was present in the majority's position. The right to liberty Kennedy had in mind suggests he did not mean it to be easily overridden by particular social mores, even the social mores of a majority of legislators. Indeed, O'Connor's more circumspect equal protection analysis suggests a similar idea. She wrote that while "prosecutions under Texas' sodomy law are rare ... the consequences of conviction are not." In other words, a conviction under such a statute "would disqualify [the convicted] from or restrict their ability to engage in a variety of professions, including medicine, athletic training, and interior design." By admitting this impact,

"The issue is whether the majority may use the power of the state to enforce these [particular moral] views on the whole society through operation of the criminal law."

O'Connor suggests that access to such social goods is a right that everyone holds, at least so long as they commit no crimes, and, obviously, a violation of a law based solely on social mores cannot be an appropriate crime. Consequently, according to both Kennedy's and O'Connor's opinions, the rights of gay people cannot be denied simply because the majority might not approve of all their conduct. This suggests that a higher degree of protection may be afforded in the future if social mores are the only basis for allowing discrimination.

In the end the court's ruling in *Lawrence* is a major shift from where the court was when it decided *Bowers* 17 years earlier. Indeed, Justice Scalia was quite right when he pointed out that the court has taken sides in the "culture war"—that is, in the war between a traditional view of sexual mores and an alternative view that recognizes the legitimacy of gay relationships. But this taking of sides has only occurred because the culture war has been fought in terms of either being in favor of the status quo or against it. Were it that society did not affirm any particular moral view but left everyone to decide such question for themselves, the court's position would have been quite neutral. For the court then would have affirmed only an aspect of universal morality that regards all human beings as worthy of mutual respect and concern. ■

Vincent J. Samar is an adjunct law professor in Chicago and author of *The Right to Privacy: Gays, Lesbians, and the Constitution*.

No news is bad news

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42% of Americans believe that Saddam Hussein was personally responsible for the attacks on the World Trade Center.

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As world health authorities struggle to defeat the latest global epidemic, they should be preparing for the next one

By Mark Parascandola

Learning from SARS

When the World Health Organization (WHO) issued its first-ever Global Alert on March 12, declaring Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) to be "a worldwide health threat," the international scientific community mobilized overnight.

Within weeks, scientists had identified the coronavirus that causes the disease and mapped the virus' genetic code. Biotech companies jumped at the opportunity to develop diagnostic tests and other weapons for the war against SARS. And some scientists predict that, on the fast track, a vaccine could be completed within three years. But the progress of public health efforts to control the disease have proceeded at a slower, less deliberate pace.

The WHO alert followed reports of 150 suspected cases and several deaths in a one-week period from Hong Kong, Canada, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

patients being hidden from investigators and physicians being instructed not to publicize SARS deaths.

Aided by modern travel, the microbes traversed the globe undetected. On March 5, an elderly woman who had returned home to Toronto after 10 days in Hong Kong died from a chest infection, but not before passing the disease on to her son. By April 23, when the WHO issued a travel advisory for Toronto, 136 cases and 15 deaths had been reported in the province of Ontario. However, because the outbreak could be traced to a single carrier, the Toronto health authorities had a better chance of containing it. They closed infected hospitals and identified contacts of infected individuals, and by May 14, with no new cases in 20 days, Canada was removed from the WHO list of SARS affected areas.

But victory had been declared too soon. Two weeks later, Toronto was back on the WHO watch list with 60 new cases.

The real lesson of the SARS epidemic is not about the disease itself, but about the capacity to respond to the next global biological threat.

Early details were spotty. News coverage described the disease as a "form of pneumonia" or a "super-flu." Its origin was uncertain, though attention focused briefly on an American businessman who had traveled from Shanghai to Hanoi and later died of the disease in Hong Kong. Terrorism had not been ruled out as an explanation.

In fact, the epidemic had been festering for months in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong, but obtaining reliable information from the Chinese government proved difficult. When the WHO began releasing daily SARS reports, beginning March 17, the statistics for China were simply left blank with a footnote explaining that they were being "updated." After a week of waiting in Beijing, WHO investigators were finally given permission to enter Guangdong province in early April. But over the following weeks, journalists recounted stories of

More than 7,000 people were ordered into 10 days of home quarantine, including an entire suburban Catholic high school. When some kids opted to take their quarantine at local shopping malls, public health officials were quick to remind the public of their authority. Ontario Health Minister Tony Clement warned, "We can chain them to a bed if that's what it takes." (Toronto was removed from the list again on July 12.)

Meanwhile, there was much finger-pointing over who was to blame for the resurgence. Biologically, it was traced to a single "silent SARS case," a 96-year-old patient at North York General Hospital who did not show classic symptoms of the disease and was thought to have died of pneumonia. But some blamed senior medical officials for letting their guard down when the initial outbreak subsided. Hospital workers were told they no longer needed to wear

masks and gloves if they were not working with SARS patients. In addition, medical officials assumed that anyone who did not exhibit "classical" symptoms was not a SARS case (a particularly dangerous assumption when dealing with a novel agent).

Some commentators also accused Canadian health officials of practicing their own, more subtle brand of number-fudging. The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care insisted on using its own medical definition of a "probable" SARS case, which was stricter than the WHO definition because it required evidence that the disease was "progressing" on top of evidence of infection. Only the probable cases go into the official statistical reports, so this maneuver tended to lowball the morbidity count. A cynical observer might believe that this was an intentional strategy designed to stave off another travel ban. Eventually, at the urging of his own public health experts, Clement agreed to use the WHO definition, which had the immediate effect of almost tripling the official number of Canadian cases.

In the United States, public health leaders remain puzzled about why there have been so few cases here (73 cases and no deaths in total). "We still do not have a complete understanding of why, so far at least, we've not had it spread into the community," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Julie Gerberding admitted recently. But so far, the best explanation is pure luck. U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson added to growing public fears when he suggested that the disease might return with greater force in the fall flu season. "I am not confident at all," he said. "I do not think SARS is going to go away."

Currently, the risk to individuals in the United States and Canada remains extremely low. Yet there is little specific advice that government officials can offer individuals for protecting themselves. When it came to giving advice to the public, Gerberding simply said: "My advice is to kind of follow the same rules your mother taught you in kindergarten. Keep your hands clean, and cover your mouth with a tissue if you're coughing and sneezing."

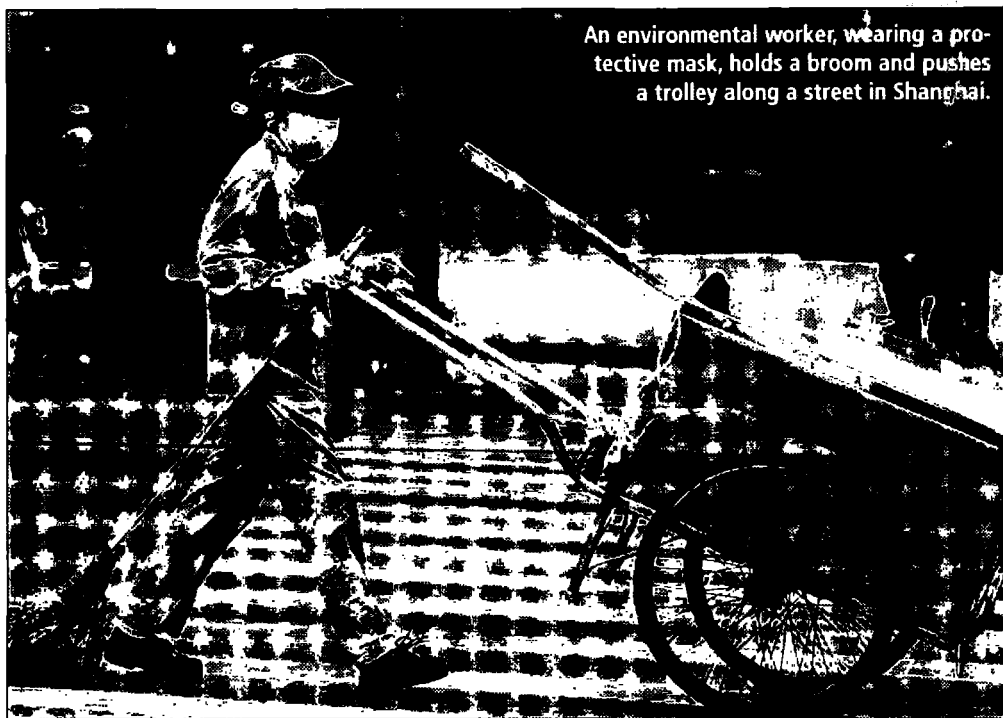
According to the most recent reports, a turning point has been reached, and the epidemic appears to be in decline worldwide. As of July 2, the WHO reported a total of 8,442 cases and 812 deaths from SARS since the disease first became known. But there have been fewer new cases appearing in recent weeks. Additionally, the Chinese government has taken a more vigorous and open approach to combating the epidemic, setting up roadblocks and even (against the advice of public health officials worldwide) warning that individuals who violate their quarantine could be sentenced to death.

Why should SARS warrant such global attention? After all, there are far more deadly diseases out there. WHO officials argue that the intense focus on SARS is warranted for now because there is a limited window of opportunity within which to defeat

the disease. David Heymann, WHO executive director for communicable diseases, explained, "When we put out the announcement about this new disease, one of our major concerns was that maybe we could stop this disease from becoming endemic."

Moreover, while the number of deaths has been relatively small so far, that could change dramatically if the disease were to spread freely throughout Asia. Estimates of the death rate for people infected with the SARS virus run from 4 percent to 10 percent. The death rate from the Spanish Flu, which circled the globe and killed 50 million people between 1918 and 1920, was lower, about 3 percent. But what made the Spanish Flu so deadly was not a high mortality rate, but the fact that it was so easily transmitted and infected entire populations. In public health terms, the probability of death for the infected individual is only one part of the equation.

The SARS epidemic has also forced discussion about public health legal authority. When a woman arrived in the United States on a plane from China with a fever and cough, CDC officials at the airport wanted her taken to the hospital for examination. However, when she refused to comply, they were powerless to do anything. Federal law allows for the "apprehen-



An environmental worker, wearing a protective mask, holds a broom and pushes a trolley along a street in Shanghai.

UN / JIN / AFP

sion, detention, or conditional release of individuals" for quarantine purposes, but only for diseases that are specified in the federal regulations, including cholera, plague, smallpox, and other ancient scourges. On April 4, President Bush issued an Executive Order adding SARS to the list.

Public health experts warn that the real lesson here is not about SARS, but about our capacity to respond to the next big biological threat. In other words, disease prevention requires more than strengthening our own borders. It requires training experts in epidemiology and surveillance and establishing state-of-the-art laboratories around the globe. If SARS persists in Asia for the long term, it will continue to threaten us. As Barry Bloom, dean of the Harvard School of Public Health, writes in a recent issue of *Science*, "In a world that is increasingly angry at the United States, the lesson here is that it is time to support a global war on disease." ■

How humanitarian is military intervention?

**John R. MacArthur and Ian Williams weigh
the perils and promise of the use of force.**

AGAINST LIBERAL INTERVENTION

By John R. MacArthur

During the early phase of the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq, I came across a scathing critique of the war in a surprising locale, written by the unlikeliest (or so I thought) accuser of the Bush-Blair axis of imperialism.

The publication was Conrad Black's militantly right-wing, pro-war British weekly, *The Spectator*, and the author was named Hitchens—not the putatively “leftist” one named Christopher, but his supposedly “reactionary” brother, Peter.

In its high rhetorical pitch the essay was pure Hitchens, regardless of given name. But there was no confusing the brothers after the first paragraph. Operation Iraqi Freedom, according to Peter Hitchens, was a “left-wing war,” a destructive enterprise that provided “the excuse for censorship, organized lying, regulation, and taxation,” a “paradise for the busybody and the narc” that “damages family life and wounds the Church, all the while polluting the minds of millions with scenes of horror and death.”

Remarkable, especially coming after my old ally C. Hitchens' celebrated defection from the leftish, anti-American peace camp to the bipartisan war party. But a left-wing war? Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz et al. in the same ideological basket as Eugene Debs, William Sloane Coffin, and Michael Moore?

At first glance, Peter Hitchens' thesis was preposterous—the application of raw, unilateral military power (and the subsequent war profiteering by big business) seems a rather authoritarian idea more in keeping with the brutal dogma of Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan than with nice liberal notions of international cooperation, humanitarian aid, and peaceful disarmament. But on closer examination I realized that Peter Hitchens was on to something, for if you think that namby-pamby niceness is all the liberal left has been pushing the last two decades, you haven't been paying attention.



**Total the many thousands of civilian
dead in the first Gulf War, Somalia,
Kosovo/Serbia and Gulf War II, and
you already have a pretty good
argument against liberal intervention.**

Indeed, liberals have been lobbying since the early '80s for more aggressive “humanitarian” interventions that would override the niceties of international law, the sovereignty of nations, and even U.N. peacekeeping efforts. To the extent that the Bush-Blair doctrine of pre-emptive war encompasses human rights and the “right” to overthrow tyrants, this one was very much a “left-wing” war.

Of course, I don't buy George Bush's human rights rationale for Gulf War II any more than I bought his father's epiphany in

1990 that Saddam Hussein was the new Hitler. Too many murderous American clients, including Saddam, have gone in and out of favor since 1898 (the year we "liberated" Cuba from Spain) for me to take seriously the altruistic prattle emanating from this White House.

But a surprising number of liberals did take Bush at his word (as they had his father) whenever he turned misty-eyed about Baathist atrocities (real and fabricated), as well as the urgent need for "liberating" the Iraqi people. Behind their dovish compassion lay a ferocious streak of Wilsonian hawkishness that had first presented itself during the Bosnia crisis in the early '90s.

It was then that human rights hawks adopted the principle of "liberal intervention" laid down in the '80s by two Paris-based intellectuals, the international law professor Mario Bettati and the physician-activist Bernard Kouchner. Eventually, as Ian Buruma recently wrote in the *New York Review of Books*, the rhetorical grandstanding by Kouchner—"the day will come ... when we are able to say ... 'Mr. Dictator, we are going to stop

you preventively from oppressing, torturing and exterminating your ethnic minorities'"—took hold and nice liberals started sounding like nasty, pre-emptive militarists.

I recall a hair-raising speech by the currency speculator-turned-human-rights-promoter George Soros, in which he argued for creation of a U.N. rapid deployment military force that could intervene anywhere in the world on a moment's notice to prevent the powerful from killing the weak—by killing the powerful. Around the same time, it became fashionable on the left (especially in the neighborhood inhabited by Susan Sontag and David Reiff) to denounce the U.N. peacekeepers in Bosnia for not being sufficiently anti-Serb, the Serbs being ultra-nationalist "fascists." At a human rights group board meeting I heard a well-known U.S. television journalist actually refer to the blue-helmeted soldiers in Sarajevo as "capos in a concentra-

Continued on page 25

INTERVENE WITH CAUTION

By Ian Williams

Three years ago, U. N. Secretary General Kofi Annan asked, "If humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica—to gross and systematic violations of human rights that affect every precept of our common humanity?" It was a good question. A year ago the Canadian-sponsored International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty tried to answer Annan's question. The commission's report, "A Responsibility to Protect," described intervention as self-evidently dangerous and susceptible to abuse, and went on to lay down strict "precautionary principles" to prevent perversion of the concept (see box).

Anticipating such dangerous precedents as Iraq, the Canadian report concludes:

Military intervention for human protection purposes is an exceptional and extraordinary measure. To be warranted, there must be serious and irreparable harm occurring to human beings, or imminently likely to occur ... large scale loss of life, [or] ethnic cleansing.

There were indeed grounds for such intervention in Iraq in the '80s, but at that time the United States and United Kingdom were supporting the Iraqi regime.

In the recent Iraq war, by contrast, one of the worst misdeeds that George W. Bush committed, in collaboration with Tony Blair, was to bring humanitarian intervention into disrepute. By invoking

Saddam Hussein's tyranny as a pretext for attacking Iraq, as he did in his speech to the United Nations last September, the President reached fairly spectacular depths of hypocrisy, since it was his country, his party and indeed his father who had supported Saddam when he was perpetrating these crimes.

Sadly however, many so-called leftists have shown a similar lack of principle. Their answer to Annan's question is to deny that Rwanda or Srebrenica happened, or to justify them, or, more chillingly, to argue that such atrocities are the price that has to be paid to maintain the principle of (U. S.) nonintervention. It is difficult to understand why any genuine socialist would defend, especially on principle, the inalienable sovereignty of Saddam Hussein, Idi Amin, Pol Pot or Slobodan Milosevic, since that would have required them to defend the Argentinean and Chilean juntas, and, indeed, the Apartheid-era leaders of South Africa. Surely a left or internationalist response to events such as those in Rwanda, East Timor, or currently in the Congo should be to demand more timely intervention, not to deny the principle. However, the part of the political spectrum that used to preach proletarian internationalism and the impending demise of the bourgeois nation state is now all too often the most resolute defender of national sovereignty, no matter how objectionable the rulers of a country may be.

Today, Cuba preaches the doctrine of national sovereignty to cover its executions and its imprisonment of dissidents, but its

practice in Africa and Latin America was somewhat different. Che Guevara was killed while engaged in some deeply serious interference in the internal affairs of Bolivia, for which he had Havana's direct support.

There are indeed serious grounds to worry about the prospects of world peace if any nation were to claim an inalienable right to intervention. But until George W. Bush recently got dangerously close to espousing that concept, no one did. Even so, we should not let the President's misappropriation of humanitarian intervention alienate the concept from its natural owners, the left.

Let's consider the origins of humanitarian intervention. Historically, international law has been based upon the premise that what countries did to their own citizens, inside their own borders, was no one else's business. And until very recently, if you were a head of state, you were deemed to have total impunity for any crimes committed in your name. On the face of it, this cannot be a good thing—unless you are a head of state with murderous tendencies.

Although the U.N. Charter is based upon the sovereign equality of member states and noninterference in each others' affairs, U.N. resolutions against South African Apartheid back in the '40s showed that members themselves thought there were some limits. And in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights created at least moral obligations upon every member of the United Nations to respect human rights.

A RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

The report from the Canadian-sponsored International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (www.iciss-ciise.gc.ca) set forth the following four "precautionary principles":

Right intention: The primary purpose of the intervention, whatever other motives intervening states may have, must be to halt or avert human suffering. Right intention is better assured with multilateral operations, clearly supported by regional opinion and the victims concerned.

Last resort: Military intervention can only be justified when every non-military option for the prevention or peaceful resolution of the crisis has been explored, with reasonable grounds for believing lesser measures would not have succeeded.

Proportional means: The scale, duration, and intensity of the planned military intervention should be the minimum necessary to secure the defined human protection objective.

Reasonable prospects: There must be a reasonable chance of success in halting or averting the suffering which has justified the intervention, with the consequences of action not likely to be worse than the consequences of inaction.

The first recent invocation of the concept of humanitarian intervention was the confused moves in the '80s to protect the Kurds in Northern Iraq. The Western allies, reluctantly dragged in by popular pressure following TV coverage of what the Baathists were doing, imposed a no-fly zone over northern Iraq. At the time, according to the United Nations' legal department, the only precedent they could find for "humanitarian intervention" was Adolf Hitler's invocation of the plight of the Sudeten Germans as an excuse to attack Czechoslovakia.

Since then, humanitarian intervention has been driven largely by popular opinion. In the '90s, the public began to clamor for political leaders to "do something" about Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, Rwanda, Kosovo and East Timor. In most of these cases, if politicians took any action, it was usually a reluctant and half-hearted response to the polls.

To those who complain that the Western powers have been too eager to intrude in the internal affairs of sovereign nations, I say there has not been enough intervention. Firmer action by the international community in Bosnia would have stopped ethnic cleansing affecting millions and prevented some 200,000 deaths in Bosnia. In 1994, the United States vetoed any attempt to reinforce U.N. troops in Rwanda, leaving 800,000 to die on the altars of national sovereignty and Western indifference. In the cases of Cyprus, Western Sahara, East Timor, and the Occupied Territories, the United Nations should have intervened more forcibly. In so doing it would merely have been acting to reverse occupations already condemned by the Security Council.

Like the Canadian Commission, most proponents of humanitarian intervention see it as a tool to be used only very sparingly, and then only with the strictest safeguards against abuse by the unscrupulous such as Bush. There are not that many situations where the perils of intervention outweigh the benefits; arguments about when and where to intervene should not be about absolutist (and often expedient) principles but about practical outcomes.

Ironically, some on the left, not content with letting atrocities happen in the name of non-interference, now also join with the far right in their suspicion of international courts and tribunals that threaten justice against the perpetrators. We hear that the international tribunals are "victor's justice," or imperialist kangaroo courts. One just has to look at the eclectic group of defenders of Slobodan Milosevic, many of whom also saw the better side of Saddam Hussein when he fell out with the United States. To use one of their own classic formulations, "objectively" those who deny the applicability of international humanitarian laws are supporting impunity for Kissinger and Pinochet as well.

In the end, if they think about it, I'm sure that most readers of *In These Times* are happy that men like Ariel Sharon or Robert Mugabe now have to check with their lawyers before calling their travel agent. But they would be happier if their crimes were stopped at an earlier stage. ■



GETTY IMAGES

AGAINST LIBERAL INTERVENTION

Continued from page 23

tion camp," who functioned as oppressors, not protectors, of the noble Bosnians.

"Liberal" military interventions by the United States and its allies followed in due course. Bush I had already played the human rights card by promoting the fake baby incubator atrocity in Kuwait, a brilliant maneuver that undermined both the "no blood for oil" and the "no more Vietnams" lobbies. Then came Somalia, which was a disaster for Americans and Somalis alike; Haiti, where the United States intervened in support of the sometimes repressive Bertrand Aristide; and lastly, Kosovo, which achieved reverse ethnic cleansing of Serbs on behalf of the Kosovo Liberation Army. Like Saddam, Slobodan Milosevic was alternately denounced by do-gooders on the left as a Hitler-like fascist and "the last Stalinist," first cousins to Christopher Hitchens' "Islamic Fascists."

Kosovo was the clearest assertion of the new doctrine of liberal intervention, a legal and moral template for the overthrow of Saddam. According to its critics, the NATO bombing campaign was a pre-emptive war in clear violation of international law (Kosovo was legally part of Serbia, which had attacked no other country). But liberals were happy because the 78 days of aerial mayhem led to the eventual removal of Milosevic from power.

"Leftists" more radical than Kouchner, like Paul Berman, now seek to expand the concept of liberal pre-emption by claiming Abraham Lincoln as their patron saint. Lincoln, they say, was bent on liberating the whole world, not just the southern states—a foolish exaggeration about a practical politician who

The United States vetoed any attempt to reinforce U.N. troops in Rwanda, leaving 800,000 to die on the altars of national sovereignty and Western indifference.

nearly wrecked his career by opposing America's imperialist invasion of undemocratic Mexico in 1846 (and who initially wanted to send the slaves back to Africa). It's no coincidence that President Bush has chosen the *USS Abraham Lincoln* for his welcome-home photo op.

Where does all this leave the liberal constitutionalists like me, who opposed all the aforementioned interventions? I certainly subscribe to the principle of universal human rights, just as I support the corrupt and imperfect United Nations. But I understand that the Enlightenment ideals codified by the United Nations stem from the (thus far) historically unique Nazi terror. And I suspect that all attempts to compensate for the lack of pre-emptive intervention against Hitler are essentially symbolic. Look how virtuous and tough we are, says Berman, compared with those weak-kneed French and British appeasers of the '30s.

The problem with symbolic military gestures is that they kill innocent bystanders as surely as do acts of naked aggression that are devoid of good intentions. Total the many thousands of civilian dead (or just dead women and children) in the first Gulf War, Somalia, Kosovo/Serbia and Gulf War II, and you already have a pretty good argument against liberal intervention.

Moreover, war unleashes death in unpredictable ways; I think, for example, that the NATO bombing led to the death of more Albanians than would have died from nonintervention—by sowing panic and granting the Serbs a pretext for settling scores with the KLA. (It's forgotten that Milosevic had agreed to U.N. monitors in Kosovo, just not in Serbia proper).

As a liberal, I wish the French had invaded the Rhineland in 1936 when Hitler remilitarized the region in violation of the Versailles peace agreement. But as an American liberal, I also wish that my fellow citizens believed that charity begins at home; I wish the United States had taken in millions of persecuted Jews before Hitler could liquidate them; I wish we'd offered a haven to tens of thousands of Bosnians—Muslim, Orthodox Christian, and Catholic—for we could certainly have afforded it. And I wish that we had listened to a liberal Swedish internationalist named Blix, instead of a right-wing Texas nationalist named Bush.

Liberal interventionism has given moral cover to the ugliest, most undemocratic impulses seen in this country since Woodrow Wilson signed the Espionage Act (which put Eugene Victor Debs in jail for opposing the war) and unleashed his attorney general's infamous "Palmer raids" against "subversives" (John Ashcroft must envy the free hand of Alexander Mitchell Palmer). Worse still, Liberal interventionism has defaced the Constitution with the forged signature of Lincoln, written in the blood of Arabs who will never stroll on the Mall. ■

John R. MacArthur is the publisher of Harper's Magazine and author, most recently, of *The Selling of Free Trade*.

How *Badly* Do You Want to *Win*?

By Rep. Jan Schakowsky

Do you want a different president in 2004? I'm asking this as a serious question, not a rhetorical one. Do you want it badly enough to actually do what is necessary to win the election that will take place just 17 months from now?

Everywhere I go, everywhere every Democrat goes, we hear, "Where are the Democrats?" I take that challenge seriously, and many of us are working day and night to make ourselves heard, putting together a strategy with members who are willing to use tougher language and "creative" tactics in coordination with outside organizations.

Yes, we need more Democrats who believe, as Paul Wellstone said, that "the politics of conviction is a winning politics." But I challenge you to do the same by asking, "Where are you?" I say that as an activist and organizer myself, and with a great deal of respect for the work that all of you are doing. I acknowledge the magnificent visibility of the antiwar activities, and the Web-based organizing that has generated millions of e-mails to Congress, the work of the Anti-Tax Cut Coalition and others. I say that with enormous respect for the work of organized labor nationally and locally. I know we are all grateful to President John Sweeney of the AFL-CIO and his incredibly effective leadership.

Even so, there have been too few examples of viewpoints, other than those consistent with the administration's, breaking through to the public. If we are to win, it's clear we need to do more, do it louder, do

it faster, and do it better. And if we don't, in 2008 we will live in a country and a world far different from the one we have had and the one to which we aspire.

This president is seriously undermining the rule of law, the Constitution of the United States, and our precious civil liberties—and he's doing it all in the name of patriotism. But where are the lawyers and judges? Why am I not hearing your protests? Where are your e-mails and phone calls, your letters to the editor, your calls to talk radio, your high-profile lawsuits? Privacy is a major concern for average Americans, and Big Brother is mining our most private information as we sit here. I realized how serious this was when a woman asked me how she could get another perspective on the Iraq war and I suggested a few Web sites. She asked me if she went there if she would find herself on a list. In all honesty, I found that I couldn't say with confidence, "Absolutely no; this is still the United States of America, and you can look at anything you want."

Lawyers, judges, where are you? Seniors, where are you? I want to see sustained, loud, angry activity. After all, the Republicans still want to privatize Social Security and Medicare and cut Medicaid so they can give tax cuts to their rich friends and destroy those basic programs to boot. It's a twofer for them.

Even veterans are not immune. Many veterans have to wait 15 months just to get a doctor's appointment. The drug companies are conducting a \$150 million cam-

paign to prevent any move to lower drug prices, allocating \$9.5 million to public relations, even \$1 million to get rid of the national health care system in Canada. When I was director of the Illinois State Council of Senior Citizens, our group was chasing Dan Rostenkowski down the street. Seniors, now is the time to get on your running shoes. You should be chasing George W. Bush and Dick Cheney and Tom DeLay all over the country.

Environmentalists: Alaska is melting. The journal *Nature* reports that 90 percent of all large fish such as tuna, marlin, swordfish, cod, and halibut are gone from our oceans; fuel efficiency of our cars is at a 22-year low. It's now considered patriotic, for crying out loud, to drive a Hummer. So where the hell are you? I want to read about you or even join you protesting at hearings in Washington or Big Oil shareholder meetings. We need the activists and scientists to challenge this aggressively antiscience administration. Some things we may be able to reverse when we wrest power over the planet from their control. But extinct is extinct.

My sisters, where are the demonstrations against the war on women that is being waged every day in every way. Today on the floor is the bill to ban the mythical partial birth abortion, which is a thinly disguised assault on fundamental reproductive rights. On his first day in office, President Bush attacked the poorest, most vulnerable women in the world when he cut U.S. funds to organizations that have the gall to counsel, refer, or—

God forbid—perform abortions in countries where it is legal (which it happens to be in ours, by the way).

Our women in the military can't, with their own funds, have a safe and legal abortion at a military hospital, even if they are in Iraq or Saudi Arabia. A rabidly anti-choice man who thinks that women's health concerns can be cured with prayer now heads up the Food and Drug Administration's Advisory Committee for Reproductive Health Drugs. The Republicans want to eliminate Title IX, equal opportunities for women in education and sports. They've done little to help victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

We all need to join in the efforts of organized labor on behalf of *all* working families in this country. This week we may be considering a so-called comp time bill that shreds the basic concept of a day's pay for a day's work and makes time-and-a-half pay for overtime a thing of the past. Just picture another four years of a Bush administration unfettered by concerns of re-election. Unions are not in the 2008 picture. In 2008 there may not be any public employees, let alone public-employee unions. Everything will be privatized and contracted out. Private-sector unions will be under siege; a constant barrage of well-financed referenda will be launched in state after state; legal assaults and investigations will take place at every level, and we'll always be the target of well-financed media campaigns.

I salute the leadership that the religious leaders—clergy and lay people—have shown on the war. Don't stop now. "God is a Republican" is a guiding principle for this administration. As long as there are congressional resolutions and official days of prayer, the United States can continue to preemptively attack any country it wants. As Senate Leader Bill Frist said at a large gathering I attended, "All you need to know is the difference between right and wrong, good and evil."

Their God is homophobic and anti-choice. Education Secretary Rod Paige said: "All things equal, I would prefer to have a child in a school that has a strong appreciation for the values of the Christ-



TIM SLOAN / APF

Just picture another four years of a Bush administration unfettered by concerns about re-election.

ian community. In a religious environment the value system is set. That's not the case in a public school where there are so many different kids with different kinds of values." The dangerous destruction of the wall between church and state is well underway. Religious leaders and the faith community need to address this.

Disability rights activists, immigrant advocates, housing advocates, civil rights leaders, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender activists, all warriors for social and economic justice, thank you for what you do. And now we need to do more, do it

louder, do it faster and do it better.

Clearly the right has a number of tools at its disposal now that we don't have.

1. Republicans control the White House and are placing ideologues at every level of the administration, the Senate and House, and much of the judiciary.
2. The right controls much of the media, which creates a very effective echo chamber for the Republicans' initiatives and smear campaigns. The June 2 ruling of the Federal Communications Commission lifting most restrictions on con-

solidation will allow the Foxification and Clear Channelization even more.

3. The Republicans have most of the money, and their corporate agenda and tax cuts for the rich ensure that they will continue to do so.
4. The Republicans lie with impunity. Let's face it. They're liars. They lied about the reason they took our sons and daughters to war. They spend millions of dollars in campaign ads saying they are for a prescription drug benefit under Medicare. They call their dirty air legislation "Clear Skies" and their plan to give the timber companies our trees, "Healthy Forests." They call their job-killing economic program a "jobs program." They say they are for peace when they are for war. Millions of children are left behind under their miserly "No Child Left Behind" education bill. They tout a child tax credit and then silently drop it in favor of more tax cuts for millionaires.

ried away even though the City Council had passed a strong antiwar resolution.

The nuns wanted to know what could be done to change the state of affairs. I said I thought someone needed to take voter registration forms to every meeting and demonstration and get people fired up to vote. They said that would be hard. Why? Because people were fed up with the Democrats. I said, then they are going to have to *get over it*, and you are going to have to help them. Because like it or not, either George W. Bush or the Democratic nominee, whoever he may be, will be our next president.

All of you know who I'm talking about; I may be talking about you. We should, by all means, be working to promote a progressive agenda with each and every candidate and to make the nominee as progressive as possible.

But in the end, we are going to have to dedicate ourselves to electing the Demo-

The missing weapons of mass destruction are becoming a real annoyance to them now, and the media is starting to pick it up. More and more members of Congress, even some Republicans, are asking for investigations. Editorial boards are beginning to write about it.

We need to take advantage of these opportunities. The polls tell us that the president is in fact vulnerable. His re-elect numbers are not that great. We have to do with fervor what we already know how to do. We have to register base voters who have left us at least in part because they think we don't speak to them. And here you have another choice. You can bitch that the Democrats don't speak to them, or you can speak to them, one on one, door to door, worker to worker, meeting after meeting, neighbor to neighbor. Set a goal for yourself, perhaps to register 100 new Democratic voters between now and Election Day.

If we are serious about getting rid of George W. Bush in 17 months, we have to make some decisions and some commitments.

5. Perhaps most important, the Republicans are unabashed and unapologetic about pushing their right-wing agenda, no matter what. They are always playing offense. I used to think, oh, they can't be serious about this or that—another huge tax cut, eliminating Title IX, continuing tax breaks for companies that move their offices to Bermuda, locking up immigrants indefinitely without due process, using federal dollars to build churches—it's just a trial balloon. Forget it. They mean what they say and they don't give up until they get it. This is where we come in.

If we are serious about getting rid of George W. Bush in 17 months, then we have to make some decisions and some commitments. During the war, a couple of nuns came to see me in my Chicago office. They were on their way to jail to serve a three-month sentence for an aggravated misdemeanor for protesting the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia. They crossed a line in the road and now they were going to prison. Think of it. Anyway, on their way to jail, they had been arrested on Lake Shore Drive in Chicago in an antiwar protest. The police got a bit car-

crat. To do otherwise is a luxury we cannot afford. I look forward to our campaign for a universal health care plan or a real education bill or labor law reform. We cannot even have that conversation now. We are trying to hang on by our fingernails to what we have now. And we are losing.

The good news today is that we have them on the run on several fronts. They were hoping that the conversation this week would be about the flag burning amendment that passed the House yesterday and partial birth abortion. Instead it's about their decision to cut 6.5 million American families with 12 million children, including families of servicemen and -women, out of their tax relief bill because they jeopardized tax cuts for the rich. Some Senate Republicans realize this level of greed may have been a tad too much for most Americans, but Tom DeLay, God love him, is really steaming that Democrats are demanding action on the issue. He says, "There are a lot of things that are more important than that." Like more tax cuts for the rich. He indicated that he'd think about it if it were part of a package that permanently repealed the estate tax.

Become part of a progressive echo chamber. When the Republicans go after Tom Daschle or Nancy Pelosi for being unpatriotic when they criticize the president, Fox News and Rush Limbaugh begin spinning the same line. We need to push back, writing letters to the editor, calling talk shows, e-mailing Congress, e-mailing Sean Hannity and telling him he's out of line, calling *them* un-American for stifling dissent.

When Republicans launch a really bad proposal or Democrats a good one, we need to have coordinated efforts throughout the country. We need to use our think tanks and grassroots and Web-based organizations in increasingly creative ways and coordinate that with activities of the Democrats that are becoming more and more vocal in the Congress.

You can tell the truth. We don't need to lie. Democrats *are* better for their health and well-being, their kids' education and their family budget, and—Republican propaganda notwithstanding—our national security, stopping terrorism, and peace on earth. ■

Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Illinois) gave this speech at the Campaign for America's Future conference in Washington on June 4, 2003.

Is There Hope for Africa?

By G. Pascal Zachary

Being held up at gunpoint seems like a rite of passage for those who frequent Africa south of the Sahara. I can recall my first encounter with what, in reference to the "failed states" of the region, Robert Kaplan has

These problems have persisted for so long and are so serious that the cover story presented by *The Economist* magazine in May 2000—"Hopeless Africa"—is no longer viewed as a provocation but a prediction.

Faced with a steady media diet of African tales of disaster, disease, and mayhem, the world hardly recalls the optimism that greeted the independence of much of black Africa more than 40 years ago. Sudan became the first African colony to lose its master in 1956, but with the independence of the West African country of Ghana a year later, the promise of African freedom burst onto the global scene. Ghana's independence leader was Kwame Nkrumah, a fiery advocate of "pan-Africanism," a political and moral

travels, ordinary people often confess that they wish "the whites had stayed longer," even for another century. Nostalgia for colonialism is no justification to regret African self-government; however, most Africans "do not expect anything from the state," to quote Fantu Cheru, an Ethiopian scholar. In short, government exists only to be looted—and ignored by those with no opportunity for predation.

What went wrong? The most obvious explanation is that the transition from colonial rule to independence proved more complicated than expected. No revolution marked the break between the two periods, but rather independence

was granted by colonial masters who retained great influence over their former charges. What Benjamin Disraeli said in the 19th century was just as true in the 20th: "Colonies do not cease to be colonies simply because they are independent."

Indeed, students of Africa were concerned about the continent's fate almost from the start of decolonization. In 1964 the great British Africanist Basil Davidson published a perceptive book—*Which Way Africa?*—in which he cautiously outlined the barriers to African prosperity: a dependence on the export of raw materials, a lack of educated people, and an untested political system. Ten years

later, when Davidson published *Can Africa Survive?*, his alarm was clear enough in the book's title. Ever since, standard surveys of Africa have grown more shrill, less buoyant. In 1998, George Ayittey, a Ghanaian teaching in the United States, published to critical acclaim *Africa in Chaos*. Three years later, Africanist Peter Schwab produced an excellent survey on the region's problems and prospects, *Africa: A Continent Self-Destructs*.

But what is missing from these and other studies is any sense—beyond plati-

called "the coming anarchy." On a visit two years ago to the old colonial capital of Ivory Coast, a quaint but crumbling seaside city named Grand-Bassam, I took a stroll through dark streets after dinner only to be greeted by three young men carrying handguns. The men emptied me of money. One even took my light vest jacket.

As the robber tried on the jacket, he spun in circles in imitation of a fashion model. As he delighted his fellow robbers with his dance, I realized I'd left my only pair of eye-glasses in the jacket. I insisted on their return. The gunmen fished inside various pockets, found the glasses and returned them to me. As I fastened the specs on my face and looked at my assailants, I felt a sudden source of hope about the African predicament. The moment ended abruptly, however, when the robbers demanded that I flee, or they might shoot me. Off I ran.

Hope would appear not to be a feeling inspired by an encounter (in day or night) with Africa. The '80s and '90s are called "the lost decades" for what is also known as "black Africa," with declines posted in every social and economic metric, in virtually every country. Africa's problems are so well known as to require only a mere recitation: endless civil wars; exodus of the best and brightest; rampant AIDS; ethnic and religious strife; poor governance and selfish elites; fading economies.

vision of black brotherhood that cut across national lines and even included the oppressed souls of the African diaspora, still groaning under the boot of Jim Crow and other forms of legalized discrimination in the United States. Ghana's example made independence for much of the rest of Africa inevitable—and fueled civil-rights protests in the United States.

A half-century later, the optimism has vanished, and even Africans themselves sometimes privately bemoan the sudden passing of colonialism. In my



TERRY LABAN

tudes—of how Africa can get out of its current mess. A new survey of the continent, *Africa's Stalled Development*, seeks to remedy this situation. David Leonard, dean of international and area studies at the University of California at Berkeley, has studied Africa for the past 40 years. He has produced, with Scott Strauss, a graduate student and a former Nairobi-based journalist, a succinct therapy for the sub-Saharan. In a little more than 100 pages, Leonard and Strauss distill the latest scholarship, diagnose the region's central problems, and sketch out credible, even compelling solutions. The result is a rare feat of scholarship: an authoritative work, well documented, and as relevant as today's news headlines.

From the very first page, Leonard and Strauss balance the need for an honest appraisal of African options with a reasoned sense of hope. Their aim is to blend the best of the critiques from the left and the right. They take a page from conservative critics of development by arguing that aid corrupts African societies and should be reduced. At the same time, the authors accept the established liberal view that Africa is shortchanged by global capital and thus needs relief from debt. Their starting point is radical, likely to provoke those with a serious interest in Africa to rethink traditional views: "We advocate the cancellation of all debts and the reduction of aid in order to return the initiative for Africa's development to Africans themselves."

Both debt and aid, Leonard and Strauss argue, make Africans "outward looking," more concerned about influencing foreign advisers, donors, and bankers than their own citizens. As a consequence, Africa's "local elites have no stake in the productive capacity of most of their brethren"; they need not depend on their economies for prosperity. Since half of all aid goes toward debt payment, Leonard says, both debt and aid can be reduced in tandem.

Leonard and Strauss's other radical proposal aims to remove the incentives for insurgents to seize natural-resource "enclaves" within African countries. These enclaves, which provide the dominant share of exports in far too many African countries, usually have only weak ties to the wider locale. While "tribalism" is often presented as a source of violent conflict in Africa, control over these rich enclaves is more often the cause of civil

Wars. The diamond-producing region of Sierra Leone, seized by rebels, became an important source of cash for the continuation of its civil war. Resource-rich pieces of the Congo, engulfed in war for nearly a decade, provide incentives for armies from other countries in the region to invade. The oil-producing enclave of Cabinda, in Angola, proved a bloody target.

Contests over enclaves can only be halted by international actors willing to intervene directly in African affairs. The case of Sierra Leone, where a decade of war was ended by a British occupation

Cancelling debt and reducing foreign aid will help get Africa on its feet, but what it really needs is a peasant revolution.

force, is paradigmatic. Leonard and Strauss favor what might be called a new approach to international stewardship, where the threat of a peacekeeping invasion is so real that insurgents will no longer attempt to seize resource-rich enclaves. The authors also recognize that "a narrow economic base (enclaves oriented toward foreign export) has proved disastrous" for Africa, and "has dovetailed with high dependence on foreign aid, crippling foreign debt, and a colonial legacy of domestic weak states in order to support a host of negative dynamics in Africa."

Leonard and Strauss want to believe that a benevolent international community can alter incentives to reverse Africa's dynamics. Perhaps. But international guarantees of the sort they favor

may merely heighten African dependence on outsiders, promoting a new colonialism that seeks to avoid the errors of the first go. Populists Leonard and Strauss are not.

What is still missing in the debate over Africa's future is the role of the peasant. More than half of all Africans live off the land. Independence meant little change in their lives, partly because of Africa's failure to achieve "a green revolution" of the kind that transformed the peasantry in India, China, and elsewhere in Asia. Peasant farmers remain invisible in Africa, the victims of government policies aimed at sustaining the lifestyles of urban dwellers by insuring low food prices. There has been no peasant revolution anywhere in Africa.

In *African Renaissance: Roadmaps to the Challenge of Globalization* (2002), Fantu Cheru observes: "Africa is yet to experience a well-organized peasant movement ready to challenge autocratic regimes in a credible way." While peasant revolutionary movements have lost their rationale in Latin America and Asia, they may be Africa's only real hope. Combined with Leonard's sensible advice on restructuring Africa's international relations, the political mobilization of indigenous farmers—still the backbone of African society—would set a truly new course for the world's poorest region. In Africa, peasants are more likely to dislodge parasitic elites from positions of power than are foreign do-gooders. That there is still no sign of a revolution in Africa suggests that the big story of decolonization is yet to be written. ■

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The World Was Not Enough

By Christian Parenti

The role of intellectuals and ideas in the project of empire has once again come to the fore. Witness the triumphs of William Kristol, Robert Kagan and others associated with the Project for the New American Century, who in many

American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization

By Neil Smith

University of California Press
570 pages, \$39.95

ways scripted the Iraq war long before it happened. The basic scaffolding of modern empire requires ideas, after all, just as much as it requires violence and treasure.

Thus it is worth consulting Neil Smith's new book on Isaiah Bowman, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization*. This volume marks something of a turn for Smith, whose first book, *Uneven Development*, focused on Marxist geographic theory. His second book, the widely read and perfectly timed *New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*, applied such theory to gentrification in a series of international case studies. In *American Empire* we get something totally different: a richly detailed, very empirical political biography. (In the interest of full disclosure I should mention that I know Smith fairly well.)

Not often addressed by historians, Isaiah Bowman was in fact an important player in the intellectual entourages of both Woodrow Wilson and FDR. He helped draw up the modern border of Europe, helped shape America's non-committal policy toward Jewish refugees from Nazism, and ran Johns Hopkins University and the Council of Foreign Relations. In all these capacities, he sought to harness ideas to the larger

project of American commercial and political power on a global scale. Smith's detailed and well-crafted book is simultaneously the story of Bowman, the story of geography as a discipline, and the story of American imperial thinking from World War I to the onset of the Cold War.

Fittingly, Bowman's tale begins on the land. Born in 1878 and raised on a poor farm in Michigan, Bowman was acutely aware of the enduring frontier character of his natal terrain. By age 19, the bookish farm boy had taken a job as a country schoolteacher. This coincided with America's "splendid little war" in Cuba and the Philippines. To do his part, Bowman formed a volunteer militia but was never called up. By dint of hard work and study, he soon made his way to Michigan State and from there to Harvard. This bastion of WASP erudition and social power transformed Bowman from a provincial into a real scholar and properly connected elite. At Harvard the young man studied geography, a discipline that was then a quasi-hard science, a stepchild of geology

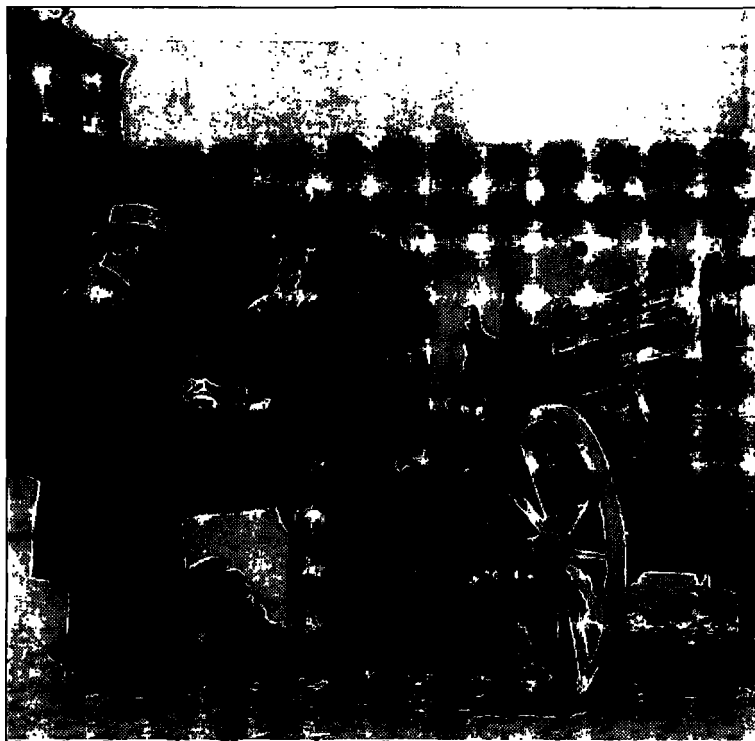
dominated, as Terry Eagleton recently put it, by "maps and chaps." Bowman's impact on geography—he later taught it at Yale—was to help steer the discipline toward a more social footing, but it would be many more decades before geography became the highly theoretical, political, and star-studded field we've seen in recent years.

As part of his geographical fieldwork, Bowman participated in several South American expeditions mapping and "discovering" places, in particular very high places in Peru. He was part of the famous Machu Picchu expedition of 1911 led by the self-aggrandizing Hiram Bingham, who later became governor of Connecticut and a U.S. senator. The "discovery" of the ancient Inca city was actually a rather simple publicity stunt by rich, white adventurers. Local people had never really "lost" the fabled city; indeed, some Quechua still lived on and around the ruins.

Like the gentlemen geographers he emulated, Bowman was steeped in racism. While on expedition in Peru he once commandeered pack animals, "hijacked" several

Quechua porters at gunpoint, and even beat another who was reluctant to work. But this sort of thing, like empire more generally, was justified in Bowman's worldview by the noble and anesthetizing pursuit of scientific knowledge. It was an intellectualizing escape clause that Bowman would use throughout his life.

In reality, Bowman's life and thought was progressively less scientific and evermore pragmatically political. As a young man, his interests were by today's definitions rather geological: He studied with William Morris Davis and was interested in the role of water in creating landscape; his explorations in Peru involved mapping rivers. Later, Bowman became interested in settlement



Servant of empire Isaiah Bowman in Warsaw, 1934.

patterns; his assumption was that "the character of the physical features" of the earth "has been a prominent factor in the life of a race." Bowman believed more or less that space created race, and that the interaction of racial national groups with the physical landscape was the essence of politics. Connected to this notion—which leaned heavily on the German geographer Friedrich Ratzel, who first coined the term *Lebensraum*—was the idea that politics was about controlling people and territory.

Yet later in life, Bowman would articulate a form of American control that left direct territorial control aside for the sake of economic conquest. So it is fitting that Bowman's early southern "conquests" took a symbolic form of cartography. He drew maps of territory, seizing it symbolically rather than actually, but helping to open it to external economic and indirect political control all the same. It was this flexible, informal style of governance that was increasingly defining America's international power in the era when Bowman was at the height of his powers in government.

For Smith this is a key point. "American globalism"—by which he means American capitalist expansion coupled with U.S. military and diplomatic power projection—never duplicated the cumbersome European form of direct territorial control. Save for a few actual colonies like Puerto Rico and the Philippines, the United States has always preferred the low overhead and "plausible denial" offered by an informal, arm's length empire of client states. The importance of Bowman in all this was that as official geographer No. 1, it was he who most clearly articulated a liberal academic justification for American *Lebensraum* as economic conquest. The easiest way forward for American elites was to stick to the heart of the matter: capital accumulation and the conquest of markets.

As an expert on settlement patterns, Bowman got his first truly big break when Woodrow Wilson called upon him to join the American delegation to the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. There the American geographer helped lead a massive study, called *The Economic and Social History of the World War*, better known simply as the "Inquiry," whose whole purpose was to formulate the basis of a "scientific peace." Toward that end Bowman created "scientific" yet rather



As official geographer No. 1, Bowman articulated the American concept of *Lebensraum* as economic conquest.

generous borders for Poland, which—along with being based on much closer study of economic, cultural, and topographical regions—created a healthy bulwark against the young Bolshevik state to the east. In Paris Bowman was also instrumental in building closer ties between the U.S. and U.K. delegations. After the war, these links deepened, and as head of the newly created Council of Foreign Relations (CFR) one of Bowman's many projects was to cement postwar Anglo-American cooperation. In many ways this development augured the passing of the baton of global hegemony across the Atlantic from England to America.

Under Bowman's lead, the CFR became a hothouse of American imperial imagination and a "contact bazaar." By the 1970s the CFR was dismissed by conservatives as too liberal, but during Bowman's tenure the CFR was a virtual private adjunct to the State Department. Every secretary of state who held office between 1921 and 1944 made speeches of "historic significance" before the CFR, and many of

its members graduated from its private and highly secretive seminars into direct government service. It was around this time in 1935 that Bowman also became president of John Hopkins University, a post he would hold until 1948.

Smith describes this period of Bowman's career as marked by forward thinking liberalism. By today's bellicose Rumsfeldian standards, Bowman and the rest of his ilk were downright sissies: They believed in diplomacy, and for a while even had a *modus vivendi* with the Soviet Union. Bowman even expressed an amoral, technocratic concern about the disruptive impacts of U.S. foreign investment in Latin America. But in some ways, this phase in his thought strikes one as simple Realpolitik in the face of socialism and a faltering global economy. He was, in short, a careful international planner, but his guiding vision was still U.S. economic domination—not as colonial ruler but as "resource trustee," guarding the wealth and development of the tropics.

Bowman's moment of greatest political influence was also his absolute moral nadir. Like most WASPs, Bowman at first greeted Hitler as a "windbag" but one that might actually be useful in putting down the red tide of socialism. Bowman even rejoiced during the 1942 Nazi counter-offensive, when Operation Barbarossa looked like it would take down the Soviet Union by liquidating millions of Russians. But all this became truly deranged when Bowman was put in charge of "Project M," in which the question of Jewish refugee resettlement was to be "scientifically" managed. Again Bowman was tapped because of his expertise on settlement patterns and "frontier belts." But nothing useful or concrete ever came of Bowman's reams of data and maps, much of which remained classified until 1960.

In the face of clear Nazi genocide, Bowman, like many other beltway elites, twiddled his thumbs while the Jews were slaughtered. In this regard Bowman hid behind the academic pettifoggery of "Project M": Refugee settlement required lots of planning, thin population distribution, lots of capital and suitable rural or frontier zones to absorb the deracinated populations. Instead of urging Roosevelt to absorb refugees from Nazi terror, Bowman suggested elaborate, expensive, developmentalist policies that sought to link refugee flows to the needs of capital

by settling out-of-the-way areas like rural Venezuela or Argentina.

Behind Bowman's studied lack of concern for the victims of Nazism was a deep-seated anti-Semitism. It seems he felt threatened by Jews, or at least by too many of them in one urban place where they might exert influence on the levers of capital and political power. As for the creation of a Jewish state, Bowman opposed the idea as it was developing in Palestine, not so much out of anti-Semitism but rather because he feared the Zionist project would require massive American subsidies and military support (which indeed it did, and does). Ultimately, Bowman's work on "Project M" calls to question the whole political edifice of scholarly detachment and the moral compartmentalization it promulgates.

For Smith, the guiding thread in Bowman's work was that he "envisaged a global supervisory role for the United States." At the end of World War II, this was best advanced through an American-

dominated United Nations, which would create a diplomatic check on Soviet power and structure the inevitable decolonization movements on the horizon. But this effort turned out to be something of a failure, at least from an imperialist point of view, because the United Nations always had too much autonomy and too many states, and was not an effective enough tool of the United States. While this is true, Smith may go too far when he says the United Nations "frustrated" American global ambition. In the Cold War, America never ruled just as it pleased, but neither was it denied a role as the leading global power, from the Bretton Woods financial framework to nuclear proliferation to the crushing of Third World insurgencies in Guatemala and Iran.

At home Bowman embraced the Cold War with red-phobic zeal, denouncing Marxism in the universities and turning harshly on the Soviet Union, which he saw as the only real check on American power. Ultimately, Bowman was both a visionary who provided academic services

and imperial imagination to American rulers and a craven egghead who wasted vast sums of government wealth on unread and unused geographical studies.

But what strikes one most is Bowman's opportunism: He was to the right of Roosevelt but subtly changed positions so as to always be in favor. He spent his life in the cloistered comfort of Ivy League universities and the inner sanctums of the executive branch. He was a stone-cold racist and anti-Semite who let Jews burn and talked of brown people in the global south as "smaller peoples" in need of control and guidance. One of his last acts of accommodation just before his retirement and early death was to passively allow a Hopkins colleague and social acquaintance, Owen Lattimore, to be red-baited by McCarthy and driven out of a job. It was the perfect, politely brutal end to Bowman's career, which is to say his life. ■

Christian Parenti is the author of The Soft Cage: Surveillance in America, to be published in September by Basic Books.

Will You Laugh for Me, Please?

By Slavoj Žižek

On April 8, Charles R. Douglass, the inventor of "canned laughter," died at 93 in Templeton, California. In the early '50s, he developed an idea to enhance or substitute live audience reaction on television. His first machine, which stood more than two feet tall, operated like an organ, with a keyboard to select the style, sex, and age of the laugh, as well as a foot pedal to time the length of the reaction. He called the device a "laff machine" or "sweetening machine," but it was mostly known as the Laff Box. First used for episodes of *The Jack Benny Show* and *I Love Lucy*, today its modernized version is present everywhere.

The overwhelming presence of canned laughter makes us blind to its core paradox, even as it undermines our natural presuppositions about the state of our innermost emotions. Canned laughter marks a true "return of the repressed," an attitude we usually attribute to "primitives." Recall, in traditional societies, the weird phenomenon of "weepers," women hired to cry at funerals. A rich man can hire them to cry

and mourn on his behalf while he attends to a more lucrative business (like negotiating for the fortune of the deceased). This role can be played not only by another human being, but by a machine, as in the

The real threat of new media is that they deprive us of our authentic passive experience, and thus prepare us for mindless frenetic activity—for endless work.

case of Tibetan prayer wheels: I put a written prayer into a wheel and mechanically turn it (or, even better, link the wheel to a mill that turns it). It prays for me—or, more precisely, I "objectively" pray through it,

while my mind can be occupied with the dirtiest of sexual thoughts.

Douglass' invention proved that the same "primitive" mechanism works also in highly developed societies. When I come home in the evening too exhausted to engage in meaningful activity, I just tune in to a TV sitcom; even if I do not laugh, but simply stare at the screen, tired after a hard day's work, I nonetheless feel relieved after the show. It is as if the TV were literally laughing in my place, instead of me.

Yet before one gets used to canned laughter, there is nonetheless usually a brief period of uneasiness. The first reaction is of mild shock, since it is difficult to accept that the machine out there can "laugh for me." Even if the program was "taped in front of a live studio audience," this audience manifestly did not include me, and now exists only in mediated form as part of the TV show itself. However, with time, one grows accustomed to this disembodied laughter, and the phenomenon is experienced as "natural." This is what is so unsettling about canned laugh-

ter: My most intimate feelings can be radically externalized. I can literally laugh and cry through another.

This logic holds not only for emotions, but also for beliefs. According to a well-known anthropological anecdote, the "primitives" to whom one attributes certain "superstitious beliefs," that they descend from a fish or from a bird, for example, when directly asked about these beliefs, answer, "Of course not—we're not that stupid! But I was told that our ancestors did believe that." In short, they transfer their belief onto another. Are we not doing the same with our children? We go through the ritual of Santa Claus, since our children (are supposed to) believe in it, and we do not want to disappoint them; they pretend to believe not to disappoint us and our belief in their naiveté (and to get the presents, of course).

In an uncanny way, some beliefs always seem to function "at a distance." For the belief to function, there has to be some ultimate guarantor of it, yet this guarantor is always deferred, displaced, never present in person. The subject who directly believes need not exist for the belief to be operative: It is enough merely to presuppose its existence in the guise of, say, a mythological founding figure who is not part of our reality.

Against this background, one is tempted to supplement the fashionable notion of "interactivity" with its shadowy and much more uncanny double, "interpassivity" (a term invented by Robert Pfaller). Today, it is a commonplace to emphasize how, with new electronic media, the passive consumption of a text or a work of art is over: I no longer merely stare at the screen, I increasingly interact with it, entering into a dialogic relationship with it, from choosing the programs, through participating in debates in a virtual community, to directly determining the outcome of the plot in so-called "interactive narratives."

Those who praise the democratic potential of such new media generally focus on precisely these features. But there



is another side of my "interaction," which the object of interaction itself deprives me of: my own passive reaction of satisfaction (or mourning or laughter). The object itself "enjoys the show" instead of me, relieving me of the need to enjoy myself. Do we not witness "interpassivity" in a great number of today's publicity spots or posters that, as it were, passively enjoy the product instead of us? Coca-Cola cans bearing the inscription, "Ooh! Ooh! What taste!" emulate in advance the ideal customer's reaction.

When a man tells a tasteless bad joke and then, when nobody around him laughs, he bursts out into a noisy, nervous laughter, he has found himself obliged to act out the expected reaction of the public for them. This supplied laughter is similar to the canned laughter of the TV set, but in this example, the agent that laughs instead of us (i.e., through which we, the bored and embarrassed public, laugh) is not an anonymous audio track claiming to laugh for an invisible public—the "Big Other"—but the narrator of the joke himself. He does this in order to ensure the inscription of his act into the "Big Other," the symbolic order of all those around him. His compulsive laughter is much like how we feel obliged to utter "Oops!" when we stumble or do something stupid. If we do not say "Oops!"—if we do not

inscribe our acknowledgement of the error onto the public order—it is as if, by allowing an imaginary dialogue between ourselves and the "Big Other" to remain incomplete, we commit ourselves to symbolic oblivion.

VCR aficionados who compulsively record hundreds of movies (myself among them) are well aware that the immediate effect of owning a VCR is that one effectively watches less films than in the good old days of a simple TV set without a VCR. One never has time for TV, so, instead of losing a precious evening, one simply tapes the film and stores it for a future viewing (for which, of course, there is almost never time). So, although I do not actually watch films, the very awareness that the films I love are stored in my video library gives me a profound satisfaction and, occasionally, enables me to simply relax and indulge in

the exquisite art of doing nothing—as if the VCR is, in a way, watching and enjoying them for me, in my place.

In the interpassive arrangement, I am passive through the Other; I accede to the Other the passive aspect (of enjoying), while I can remain actively engaged—that is, I can work longer hours with less need for "nonproductive" activity, such as leisure or mourning. I can continue to work in the evening, while the VCR passively enjoys for me; I can make financial arrangements for the deceased's fortune while the weepers mourn in my place.

One should therefore turn around one of the commonplaces of conservative cultural criticism: In contrast to the notion that new media turn us into passive consumers who just stare numbly at the screen, the real threat of new media is that they deprive us of our passivity, of our authentic passive experience, and thus prepare us for mindless frenetic activity—for endless work.

So then, would it not be a proper funeral for Charles R. Douglass if a set of sound-machines were to accompany his coffin, generating whispered laments, while his beloved surviving relatives enjoyed a hearty meal, or perhaps got some work done elsewhere? Far from finding it offensive, I think perhaps he would appreciate the recognition of such a burial. ■

Smash and Grab

By Joshua Rothkopf

Ang Lee's *The Hulk* is the kind of rambling, overstuffed psychodrama that only a true artist could create. Reportedly, the picture wasn't test-screened, a mark of Lee's power

The Hulk

Directed by Ang Lee

28 Days Later

Directed by Danny Boyle

after *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, a power he richly deserved. *The Hulk* has passages of gorgeous abstraction—montages of deep purple jellyfish, spiky lichens, and green, cellular goings-on—as well as an abundance of deadening oratory. Even the title seems to have caused some consternation: Is it *The Hulk*, as so many of us

bland *Spider-Man*, or maybe the luridness that a director like Paul Verhoeven would have injected. These are perfectly understandable yearnings in the context of big dumb fun. Instead, we get art chafing with artifice, breakdowns alternating uneasily with smackdowns. It's probably the most courageously confused movie of the year.

All of Ang Lee's films, even as they've ramped off into genre and the fantastic, operate on a personal schism that never gets resolved; so often they feel like tragedies. The foreigner and the homeland, the cushioned noose of marriage, the sword-bearing warrior with a lonely heart. *The Ice Storm* remains his truest work (and a bona fide masterpiece) for the simple fact of its elegant compression: one weekend in chilly, disconnected '70s suburbia, the parents playing morosely with swapped spouses at "key parties," the

the driven but aloof Bruce (an oddly inert Eric Bana) and his bombshell ex-girlfriend, Betty Ross (Jennifer Connelly), also a scientist. The kids have flashbacks of the "I dropped my ice cream cone" variety, plenty of tense arguments, and uncomfortable lunch dates with Dad. If it

The studio said *The Hulk*, and the director heard something else, perhaps a story of dysfunctional families torn apart by ambition.

weren't for the splendid efforts of editor Tim Squyres, combining shots with all manner of split-screen dissolves, bursting wipes, and overlapping panels, you might forget this was a comic book. Unfortunately, you never do.

What's wrong with this picture? These are fine actors (with Connelly registering especially well in her confused tenderness), a director who knows how to use them, and technical craft to spare. It must be the premise: All of this for a gamma accident resulting in huge pecs? Doesn't seem that bad. The tragic dimension is never convincing, and Lee now finds himself in a bind to justify a small fortune in therapy sessions. When Hulk happens, it comes as a relief, but a crude one—great pains have gone into making him realistic, but how sensible is that when you're talking about a 15-foot green giant with purple trunks? On a dime, the psychology shifts from adult to adolescent, and it hurts.

But then something magical happens in the homestretch, when the captured Bruce is, er, "made angry" and bursts out of an underground lab to rampage his way back to Betty. Surprisingly, the whole thing works better as King Kong than as Dr. Jekyll. All of it was for love, you finally realize (belatedly, but better than never), and everything clicks; the disapproving dad hovers impotently in his rocket-launching helicopter as the ex-boyfriend who never got over it tears apart tanks and spits warheads in his face. These desert battles have a terrific impact (one priceless insert has a fly-fishing President blithely authorizing the go-ahead), and the overall insinuation



RICHARD ELLIS/GETTY

have come to know the big fella, or just *Hulk* (as the prints say, but not Lee or his longtime producer and writer, James Schamus), thus signifying mass, transformation, maybe even a direct order?

Hard to say. But I ask you: Is this not the correct way, the honorable way, for a studio to spend \$150 million of its summer capital? Universal said *The Hulk*, and Lee heard something else, perhaps a story of dysfunctional families torn apart by ambition. Part of me wants something cleaner and poppier, like Sam Raimi's

kids with their drugs and firecrackers, giggling under a rubber Nixon mask. Can it be that the Hulk concept is a little too spare for Lee's attentions? Yes, there's a division there, but never at once—never in the same moment or mind.

Thus, a kind of pained compensation happens in the first 45 minutes, almost a whole hour of Hulkless handwringing that introduces two absent fathers—disgraced geneticist David Banner (Nick Nolte) and Gen. "Thunderbolt" Ross (Sam Elliott)—and two abandoned children,

of an unchecked rage quelled only by a sympathetic heart carries more meaning than could ever have been intended.

Twenty-eight *Days Later* is a zombie flick, which makes it my kind of movie—dare I say, our kind of movie. No cinema zombie ever shambles into view without its agenda. Really, who are these lurching sadsacks if not the enemies of racial integration (*Night of the Living Dead*, with its cool-headed black hero), proponents of mindless consumerism (*Dawn of the Dead*, set in a Muzak-laden shopping mall), or simply the victims of corporate greed (*Resident Evil*, where the undead do double duty as prudish threats to a long-legged model in a slit skirt)?

Watching *28 Days Later*, it's tempting to reach for metaphors about SARS or monkeypox. The virus that decimates London in the film's disturbing first act is triggered by—brace yourselves—overly zealous activists liberating experimental monkeys infected with “rage.” Good intentions notwithstanding, I don't think these goofballs are the real culprits, nor any kind of epidemic du jour. As images of empty freeways gather in potency, and souvenir trinkets of Big Ben are crushed underfoot, a sense of British isolationism begins to take root: “What would you do with a diseased little island?” spits one forlorn military holdout, and Tony Blair should take note. Here are the apocalyptic anxieties of going it alone.

Director Danny Boyle has no love for empire; he arrived on the scene in a big way with his second feature, *Trainspotting*, which made ironic hash of hopped-up youth disenchantment (“Choose life”) and Scottish alienation alike. Much of that should be credited to Irvine Welsh's cult novel. But it was Boyle who thought to chase them down the street to Iggy Pop's “Lust for Life,” a perfect expression of fuck-everything exhilaration that finds its wry revision here: Boyle's zombies run fast. It's a trade-off; there's something conceptually lost without the creeping progress of inevitable doom. But then again, some of these edits may have you jumping out of your seat. Hell, yeah, I'll choose life—you wanna bet? Now run. ■

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CONTINUED FROM BACK COVER

This sounds a bit strange, but there has been a slight, but weird odor in one of my storage cabinets. I am looking for someone to come in ASAP and go between the cabinets and clean it out. You may probably have to pry the wood open, but it looks like a simple task. It's a really small space (2x3), and I could probably do it myself, but I'm afraid of what I might find. I believe that it is probably rotten food from the prior tenant, but one can never be too sure (dead mouse?). If you're interested in making a quick buck, email me.

Casting overweight & middle age men (NYC, LI, NJ)

Photography student looking for Overweight and Middle Age Men to pose for various Photoshoots. Must be willing to pose nude or semi-nude. Paying job \$100 others free prints. Accepting replies for a series of photographs. Please reply with an image, headshot, snapshot, etc. Thanks for your interest.

Can someone help me install a window A/C unit? (Upper west side)

I need someone to help me install a window A/C unit. Unit can be lifted by one per-

son—it just needs to be secured in window. Please let me know your availability and what you would charge. I'm on the upper west side, near Columbia.

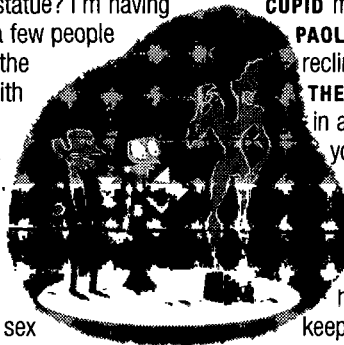
Need living statues for loft party (Manhattan)

Can you stand still for long periods of time and pretend that you are a statue? I'm having a party and I'm looking for a few people to do this. I would help find the costumes and would help with make-up. You will have to wear body paint so you look like you are made of marble, bronze, or plaster. It will be a lot of fun, you get to attend a cool NYC artist loft party, and you can take frequent breaks. This is NOT a sex party. It is a fun themed costume art party. Having been a living statue or art model before is a plus. some ideas ...

JUSTICE A woman with one breast bare holding a scale.

THE KISS A couple holding each other while naked

MICHELANGELO'S DAVID nude male in contraposto pose



MANIKIN PIS the Belgium boy who pees in fountain (must be a smallish boyish person for this one)

BACCHUS God of wine, holding grapes

LEDA AND THE SWAN woman holding a swan, nude

THE DYING SLAVE nude male with arms up

THE ETERNAL IDOL need a nude couple

CUPID male, draped, with wings

PAOLINA BORGHESE elegant nude reclines on sofa

THE THREE GRACES 3 nude women in a classic pose or let me know if you have your own idea.

PAY We can only pay \$25 per person and we'd like you to pose on and off throughout the evening. You are also allowed to have a tip basket and you can keep anything you make from tips. It might be a good thing to have on a performer's resume. You can bring along friends and a photographer if you like. We will need to see a .jpeg photo(s) of you in a pose but don't worry about the costume at this point. ■

Matt Isaac founded *Perimeter Media + Culture Projects*, which presents media arts and cultural programs and festivals in New York.

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...I MISS THE GOOD OLD DAYS. Bobditefano.com

Help Wanted

By Matt Isaac

While the economy and the job market continue to stagnate, there seems to be no shortage of odd jobs advertised on www.Craigslist.org, the nonprofit bulletin board that offers free online classified ads in San Francisco, New York, and 20 other cities. What follows is a sampling of recent job postings, a snapshot (perhaps someday of historical interest) of the New York area's labor environment circa May 2003.

Cut my bike lock (Greenpoint)

Please free my bike. The lock: Kryptonite Pad-Lock style (silver, classic, with two holes on the back NOT the cylindrical Yellow serious style) or cut a link in the Kryptonite chain. A giant pair of Bolt cutters may be all that is needed. \$15 for what it takes.

I need a cool chick or two (NYC area or Jersey)

Alright, I'll try to make this as unflake as possible. I have a Web site that is about to go online. It's being designed by someone I found on craigslist. It is a parody/funny ha-ha site. I need a girls to model for 2 pics on the site. Now before you decide I'm a sicko, hear me out. There is no nudity. The name of the site is GirlsGoneWilder.com. If you type that in it won't take you to the page yet. The whole parody/funny ha-ha thing is that the Web site will be devoted to "wild and sexy girls who go WILDER ... that's

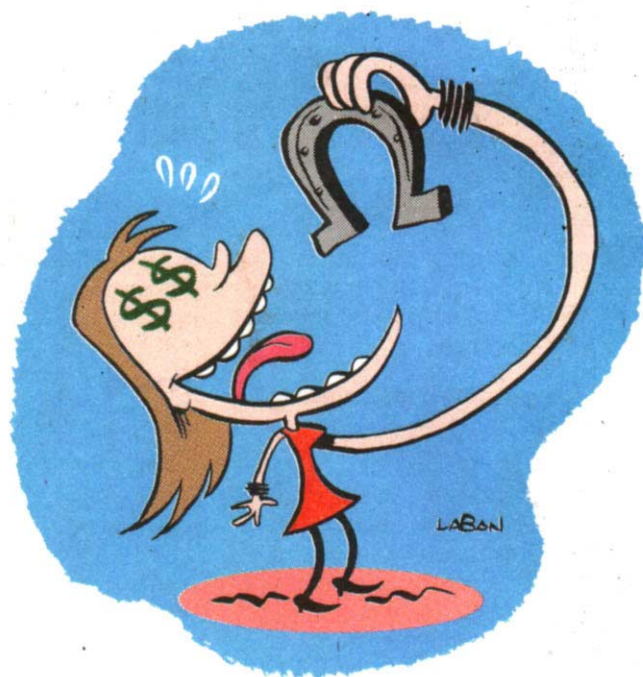
right.... Gene Wilder, the actor." What I need is a "before" pic of you looking like yourself, hopefully somewhat easy on the eyes, then the "after" pic with you dressed like Gene Wilder. What's in it for you??? I don't know. I could throw you a couple bucks. Notice the word couple. I'm open to anything. Go to the link and let me know what you think. It's not totally done yet, it'll have a page to buy shit and everything ... well you see. Get back to me a.s.a.f.p. ...

Clean our floor (Jersey City)

We just moved into a new apartment, and our floor is covered in an unidentified sticky substance. I'll give somebody \$50 to clean the floor thoroughly this weekend.

Elvis impersonator \$100 (North Plainfield, NJ)

Hi. I need an Elvis impersonator to play a bridal shower THIS SATURDAY. You provide costume, music, etc. We'd like you to per-



Seeking X-ray of swallowed foreign object for game show—make \$500! (Manhattan)

Have you ever swallowed a foreign object and then had a stomach X-ray that shows what you swallowed? If so, an exciting new reality game show wants you to play along with our wacky panelists! If booked, you will receive \$500 for your appearance on the show. Must be located in or able to reach Manhattan. No transportation is provided. Please email castme_2003@yahoo.com and put X-RAY in the subject line. Also, please include in the message your name, age, object you swallowed, and how to best reach you during the day and at night. THANK YOU!

form around 5:30 pm, but that's flexible. Your performance would probably be taped by Buff Brides, a reality TV show airing nationally starting in the fall.

Amateur female bodybuilders (New York, NY)

Seeking amateur female bodybuilders to wrestle men. will pay up to \$500 dollars per session. all ages and races and shapes and sizes, but must be amateurs—from beginners (just starting out) to veterans (never placed high enough). this is your chance to make incredible money AND assert your dominance over the opposite sex ... stupid men. there is no sexual content allowed. None whatsoever! i know it sounds a little weird that men want to wrestle women, but they

are out there. this is a gold mine. NY, NJ, CT, LI please reply. if you are looking for some extra cash ... great extra cash, please respond to the above address yesterday. thank you

Need an overweight Caucasian female for a TV documentary (Manhattan)

KBS, Korean Broadcasting System, the biggest television broadcasting company in South Korea, is seeking one overweight Caucasian female in her twenties for a documentary about abdominal obesity

Easy odd job (82nd/York)

This job is perfect if you have an hour on your hands and you do not easily get grossed out.

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